HINDU DOMESTIC RITUALS
A Critical Glance

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TO
MY DEAR DAUGHTERS :
Smt. Varshu
Smt. Vinu
and
Vasu

PREFACE

Hindu domestic rituals are recorded in the Gṛhyasūtra texts, which are the manuals of the domestic rituals of the Aryans. The tradition of these rituals is hoary and can be traced to the Ṛgveda in certain details. It has yet remained a living tradition through the centuries, generation after generation, adding to it many of its own customs and beliefs.

In the present book some of these rituals are taken up for study and an effort has been made to see the meaning underlying them. It is not a concise account of all the domestic rituals, as that would have been superfluous in the wake of studies previously done by scholars. It is an effort to explain some of the knotty and striking points in the domestic rituals of the Hindus, which, otherwise, appear to be enigmatic in certain respects.

I am glad to mention that the present book is based on the topic : "Ritual Symbolism from the Gṛhyasūtras", undertaken by me in the tenure of the Springer Research Scholarship awarded to me by the Bombay University from 1977 to 1979. I have pleasure in recording my thanks to the authorities of the University of Bombay for awarding me the scholarship, and thus initiating an effort, some of the findings from which are now placed before the scholarly world.

Bombay (Smt.) Sindhu S. Dange

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CHAPTER ONE

THE CONSTELLATIONS

The *Gṛhyasūtras* refer to the constellations at various places in connection with various rituals. Though these references mostly appear traditionally (without much change, so to say), it is interesting to go behind them and see the local beliefs that are associated with them.

The word for constellation is *nakṣatra*; and it is used right from the Ṛgvedic times.[1] Various constellations are mentioned by other texts also.[2] About the creation of the constellations, *Śat. Br*. (VI. 1. 2. 4.) says that when the moon was being created, a spray of tears fell from the eyes of the Creator; they are the constellations. *Taitt. Br*. (II. 7. 18. 3) explains that these were not strong to protect themselves from injury; hence they came to be called thus.[3] The same text gives one more explanation. It says that the constellations are in reality men on the earth, who went to heaven as they performed sacrifice (I. 5. 2; the root used here is *nakṣ*, to "reach"; *nakṣate iti*). This text records the belief that the constellations are the houses of gods.[4] *Vāyu P*. (53.28) states that the constellations are created from the sun. These explanations would indicate the general concept behind the constellations. They were believed to be divine; also, that they were the souls of the sacrificers; and also that they are produced from a living organism (=tears). As such, there is no wonder if they are believed to look upon the earthly creatures as closely related to themselves, and ultimately influence their lives! This thought is at the back of the belief that connects the constellation with various rituals, awarding the fruit thereof. On the basis of the fruits that they impart, they have been divided into two groups : *Deva-nakṣatra*; and *Yama-nakṣatra*.[5] According to this division, out of the total number of twenty-eight constellations, fourteen (from *Kṛttikā* to *Viśākhā*) are *Deva-nakṣatras;* those from *Anurādhā* to *Bharaṇī* are the *Yama-nakṣatras*. Again, there seems to be a belief that the constellation comprising more number of stars is more efficacious. Thus, *Śat Br*. (I.5.2-7) says that on the *Kṛttikā*, one should establish the sacred fires (the rite is called *Agnyādhāna*); because there are many (six) stars on this constellation. Moreover, it is said, the *Kṛttikā* does not leave the Eastern quarter, while other constellations do so.[6] The divinity of the constellation is recorded by *Taitt. Br*. (I.5.2-7), in the idea of the constellations forming the body of Prajāpati.[7] The same idea obtains further in the *Bṛhatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira.[8] We shall see below the association of the constellations with various rites in the *Gṛhyasūtras*.

1. *Marriage*

Āp. Gṛ. S. prescribes that the bride-groom should go to select the bride on the *Mṛgaśīrṣa* constellation; if he does so, all people will welcome him. The general prescription of the *Gṛhyasūtras* is that the marriage should take place on auspicions constellations, such as *Rohiṇi*, *Mṛgaśīrṣa*, *Svāti*, and those constellations that have in their name the world "*uttara*"; it is also enjoined that one should marry on a day in the bright half of the *Uttarāyaṇa* (the northern course of the sun).[10] According to Bhār. Gṛ. S. (I.12) and Āp. Gṛ S. (I.3.1-2) the constellations *Maghā* and *Phalgunī* are auspicious; in this these Sūtras point to *RV* (X.86.13), which says that in the *Maghā* the cows are given away (to the bridegroom) and the marriage takes place on the other.[11] They also say that the girl should be married on the *Niṣṭyā* (=*Svāti*), whereby she becomes beloved to her husband, and never comes back to her father.[12] The *Kauśika Sūtra* says that the whole of *Caitra* or (dark?) half of it is not good for marriage.[13] The non-suitability of this month is attested from *Bhār. Gṛ. S.*[14] About the constellation *Citrā*, the prejudice is not exactly attestable; but, we might call attention to an account about the establishment of the fire-altars. According to it, the Asuras built an altar called *Rauhiṇa* ("The Rising One") to go to heaven therby. As they were constructing it, the gods got afraid that they might really reach heaven. So, Indra approached them and requested them to let him help. On getting their consent, he also placed a brick on the rising altar. When the altar rose sufficiently high, he took out his brick; and the whole structure came down tumbling. Seeing that, the gods exclaimed, "O, wonder, *citram*". Hence, the brick came to be called *Citrā*. Hence, it is said, he who piles the altar on this constellation vanquishes the enemies. A Kṣatriya is particularly advised to build his sacrificial altar on this constellation.[15] But, here also there is nothing of inauspiciousness. Varāhamihira says that this constellation is of soft nature.[16] There is a hint from *Garuḍa* P., which divides the constellations as *Adho-vaktra* ("Facing down"), *Ūrdhva-mukha* ("Facing up") and *Pārśva-mukha* ("Facing back"), that the constellation *Citrā* (along with *Svāti*, *Revatī*, *Hasta*, *Punarvasū* etc.) is of the last type (Ib. I.16-19). May be the *Gṛhyasūtras* reflect the belief that the girl married on this "Back-facing" constellation, might turn back to her father's house!

2. *Pumsavana*

This rite, as the name shows, is to be undergone so that a son may be born; and it is to be performed in the third month of pregnancy.[17] It is also said that it should be performed when there is a constellation having the masculine name, or *Tiṣya* (=*Puṣya*),[18] having Bṛhaspati as the deity.

3. *Sīmantonnayana*

After the rite mentioned above, this one is to be undergone in the fourth month of pregnancy; and it is prescribed that the constellation be a masculine one (*Śāṅkh. Gr. S.* I.22.6).

4. *Utthāna*

This is to be undergone after the delivery, on the tenth day. On this day, three constellations, viz. the one of the birth, the one preceding it and the one that follows it are to be propitiated with cooked food-offerings (Ib. I.25.1-7).

5. *Nāmakaraṇa*

This concerns the naming of the child. It is said that a child should have two names. One should be that of a constellation, and it should be the secret name *Vaikh. Gṛ. S.* III. 19; also *Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 15 3). According to some other *Gṛ. sūtras*, out of the two names the second should be of a constellation; but which should be secret is not mentioned. (*Bhār. Gṛ. S.* I 26; *Hir. Gṛ. S.* II. 4. 11-14). In the context of the sacrifice, it is said that the sacrificer should invoke the deity with his name that was kept according to the constellation of his birth, that being his secret name. Thus, if he is born on the constellation *Kṛttikā*, his name would be *Agnimitra*, and if on the *Puṣya*, it would be Bṛhaspati etc.[19] The belief in the secret name is closely connected with the person being conjured through his name. Hence, one name is advised to be secret.[20] The secret name being that of a constellation, the presiding deity of that constellation would, it is believed, protect the person.

9. *Karṇa-vedhana*

This is the rite at piercing the ears of the child for the first time. The auspicious constellations for this rite are said to be *Tiṣya*, *Punarvasū*, *Śravaṇā* and *Dhaniṣṭhā*; also the constellations having the words *Pūrva* and *Uttara* at the beginning (such as *Purva-phalgunī*, *Uttara-phalgunī* etc.) (*Kauṣ Gṛ. S.* I. 25. 1-7).

7. *Caula-karma*

This is to be done for a male child in his third year, or on the *Punarvasū* constellation (*Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 13.3). This rite is for cutting the hair for the first time.

8. *Upanayana*

This is the rite of Initiation, and it is enjoined to be performed on a male constellation, preferably in the bright half of a month (*Bhār. Gṛ. S. I.* 1; 11; *Hir. Gṛ. S.* I. 1.5; cf. *Āgni. Gr. S.* I. 1.1).

9. *Upākarman*

This rite marked the beginning of the educational session in ancient India; and it was to be performed on the *Hasta* or the *Śravaṇā*.[21] The deity of *Hasta* is Savitṛ, and that of *Śravaṇā* is Viṣṇu, both being solar deities. The implication is clearly that the solar power should have a benevolent eye.

10. *Utsarga*, or *Utsarjana*

This rite marks the end of the educational session. This should be done on the *Rohiṇī* constellation.[22]

11. *Samāvartana*

This marks the return of the student to his house, with the permission of the preceptor, after the close of the studies. He takes the ritual bath (*snāna*) and becomes the *snātaka*. This was to be done, according to some *Gṛ. Sutras*, in the *Uttarāyaṇa* and in the bright half of a month. The constellations mentioned in this context are *Rohiṇī*, *Mṛgaśīrṣa*, *Tiṣya*, *Hasta*, *Uttara-phalgunī*, *Citrā* and *Viśākhā*.[23] According to *Jaim. Gṛ. S.* (I.19: 17.13; also *Baudh. Ś. S.* 17.39), a student who wants to enter the life of a house-holder and desires progeny, should take the said bath on the *Rohiṇī*, which is connected with Prajāpati.. If he desires to perform a *Soma*-sacrifice, he should do so on the *Mṛgaśīrṣa*, associated with *Soma*. One who desires lustre of the Self, he should take bath on the *Tiṣya* constellation, which is associated with Bṛhaspati; on the *Hasta* if he desires the lustre of Savitṛ; if he desires popularity among friends, he should take bath on the *Anurādhā* constellation, that is associated with *Mitra*; and if he desires to perform sacrifices, he should take bath on the *Śravaṇā* constellation. sacred to Viṣṇu.

In addition to the rites mentioned above, there are also others that have association with the constellations. They are as follows :

1. *Śravaṇā*, or *Śravaṇā-karman* : (See *Sarpabali*)

This was to be done on the constellation *Śraviṣṭhā*, in *Śravaṇā* (*Śaṅkh. Gṛ. S.* IV. 15.1), while according to *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* (III.10.2), it should be performed every year, every six months, every four months, or every season, or every month of the four months of the rainy season, and on the *Āśleṣā* constellation. The deity of this constellation is the Serpent; hence, it is proper that the rite is called '*Sarpabali*' by *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* (loc. cit.).

2. *Āgrahāyaṇī*

The first Full-moon-day of the year is called *Āgrahāyaṇī*; and the rite to be performed on this day has the same name. From this day the cots that were used to sleep upon for fear of the serpents could be dispensed with (*Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* IV. 17. 1-2). The rite to put away the cots was called *Pratyavarohaṇa* ("stepping down"). This was to be done on the *Rohiṇī* or *Prauṣṭhapadā*.

3. *Caitrī*

This is the rite for the Full-moon-day of *Caitra*. The constellation for this rite may be fixed from the convention of the folks, according to *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* (IV. 19. 1-5).

4. *Lāṅgala-yojana*, *Kṛṣi-karman*
(The yoking of the Plough)

This rite is for the tilling of the agricultural land. It is to be accomplished on the *Uttara-proṣṭhapadā*, *Uttara-phalgunī* or *Rohiṇī* (*Āśv. Gṛ. S.* II. 10.3-4; also *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya-kārikā* II. 19). According to *Taitt. Br.* (I.8.4.2), the field should be ploughed for the first time in the season on the *Anurādhā* constellation, the deity of which is Mitra. But, according to *Pār. Gṛ. S.* (II.13.1) it could be done on any day that is auspicious, or on the *Jyeṣṭhā* constellation, which is presided by Indra. The rite itself is addressed to Indra. Indra is also the deity of rain, and that Indra is associated with the fertility of land is a belief that touches the Vedic period.[24]

5. *Vṛṣotsarga*

This is the rite for the release of the bull (*vṛṣautsarga*). There is a general agreement about the constellation for this rite, which is *Revatī* in the month *Āśvina*, or on the Full-moon-day in *Kārttika*. The deity of the *Revatī* constellation is Pūṣan, and is associated with the wealth in cattle.

6. *Śūlagava*

This rite is so called, according to *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* (I. 1.9; II. 7.14), as in it the objects got from a cow are cooked on a spike (*śūla*). Nārāyaṇa, the commentator of *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* (IV.9.1), however, says that it is so called as it is associated with Rudra. The same is the explanation of *Śaṅkh. Gṛ. S.* (IV. 17. 1-2; also *Āgni. Gṛ. S.* II.5.8). According to *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* (IV. 9.2) it is to be performed on the *Ārdrā* constellation in Autumn or in the Spring. It is also to be performed if, and when, the cattle suffer from some disease. It may be noted in this connection, that Rudra, who is symbolized by the zoomorph of the Bull is also the deity of cattle. According to *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* (II. 7.1-3, also *Āgni. Gṛ. S.* II. 5.8) this rite is to be performed when there is some disease to the cattle, as noted above, and also when they stray away from the locality; it is to be performed on the *Ārdrā*, or when there is the Full-moon-day in *Mārgaśīrṣa*.

The various results that are associated with the constellations can be studied with the help of certain works, such as *Śāntikalpa* and the *Nakṣatrakalpa*. The *Śāntikalpa* has classified the constellations into six groups: *Dhruva* (steady), *Dāruṇa* (cruel), *Cara* (moving), *Mṛdu* (soft), *Kṣipra* (swift) and *Ugra* (fierce). The *Yajuṣa Jyotiṣa* records some constellations as fierce and cruel (*Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa*, *Yajuṣa mantra* 42). The *Ātharvaṇa Jyotiṣa* classifies the 27 constellations (the number 28 is due to the inclusion ot *Abhijit*, which is said to be excluded earlier, but included as the son of the *Śravaṇa*)[25] into three groups of three each. The *Bṛhatsamhitā* classifies them into seven groups (98.6-11). We have noted the classification according to the *Garuḍa Purāṇā*, above; *Brahmāṇḍa P.* (II. 3.3.47 ff) divides them as *Nāgavīth*, *Gajavīthi*, *Ajavīthi*, *Mārgī-vīthi* and *Vaiśvānarī-vīthi*. From this the belief in the influence of the constellations on the rites is clear.

References

1. cf. *RV* I. 50. 2; III. 54. 19; VII. 86. 1; X. 6. 11; X. 85.2; X. 111.7 etc.
2. *Taitt. Sam.* IV. 4. 10. 1-3; *Taitt. Br.* I. 5; III. 5; *AV* XIX. 7.2-5; *Kāṭh. Sam.* 39. 13; *Mait. Sam.* II. 13. 20. etc.
3. *Taitt. Br.* II. 7. 18.
4. *Ibid.*, I. 5.2. The Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Apte derives the word as *na Kṣarati*; and the reference is to *Uṇādi* 3.105; but, the exact aphorism is *abhinakṣiyajivadhipatibhyo' tran*, which shows the suffix aṣ *atra*, and the number of the aphorism is 385; the root is not *nakṣ kṣar* but ("to go").
5. See Kane, *Hist. of Dh.*, Vol. V-i, p. 505; 524; for the *Yama-constellation*, *AV* VI. 110.2-3; *Taitt. Br.* I. 5. 21; III. 1. 28; for the *Pāpa* constellation, *Kauśika Sūtra* 46.25; for the male constellation, Ibid. 35.2.
6. *Sat. Br.* II. 1.2-3.
7. *Taitt. Br.* I.5.2-7 *hasta eva asya hastaḥ citrā Śiraḥ niṣṭyā hṛdayam ūrū viśākhe pratiṣṭhā anurādhā eṣa vai nakṣatriyaḥ prajāpatiḥ*. The same idea is carried further in the Purāṇas. See *Vāmana* p. 54, where Viṣṇu is so described; also *Bhaviṣya* p. *Uttara*, 108.16ff.
8. *Bṛhatsamhitā* 104. 1-5. Here *Kāla* is conceived as a man (*Puruṣa*); and the various constellations are said to be his limbs.
9. *Āp. Gṛ.S.* I.2.16, The commentator, Haradatta, says here that here we have a *gāthā* (folk-verse) cited. *Invakā* means *Mṛgaśīrṣa*.
10. *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.S.* I.5.5; *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* I.4.1; *Pār. Gṛ.S.* I. 4.5; *Gobh. Gṛ.S.* II.1.1; see also *Baudh Gṛ.S.* I.1.20; for other details see *Mān. Gṛ.S.* I.7.5; *Kāṭh. Gṛ.S.* 14.10; *Pār. Gṛ.S.* I.4.6-7.
11. The *mantra* is: *aghāsu hanyante gāvo ṛjunyoḥ paryuhyate AV* XIV. 1.13 has *maghāsu hanyante gāvaḥ Phalgunīśu vyuhyate*. The general rendering of the *mantra*, which comes in the context of the marriage of *Suryā*, is that the cows are sent (as gift for the bride-groom) on the *Maghā* constellation; and the bride is taken

to the house of her husband, *Soma* here, on the *Arjunī* constellation, which is the same *Phalgunī* (*Purva* or *Uttara*). At *Śat. Br.* II. 1 2.10-11, where the *mantra* occurs, Sāyaṇa renders the words *gāvaḥ hanyante* as *daṇḍaistāḍyante preraṇārtham*; Kane follows Sāyaṇa, *op. cit.*, p. 497, N. 726.

12. *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* I.12; *Āp. Gṛ.S.* I.3.3. see also *Taitt. Br.* I.5.2-3.
13. *Kauśika S.* 74.4.
14. *Bhār. Gr.S.* I.12.
15. *Śat. Br.* II. 1.2.9ff; *Taitt. Br.* I.1.24-26.
16. Varāhamihira classifies the constellations into seven groups; see *Bṛhatsamhitā* 98.6-11.
17. *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* I. 13.2; *Sāṅkh. Gṛ.S.* I. 20.1-2; *Kau, S.* 35.1-2; *Jaim. Gṛ.S.* I.5; 6.3; *Hir. Gṛ.S.* II. 2.1-2; *Gobh. Gṛ.S.* II .6.1; *Khā. Gṛ.S.* II.2-17.
18. For the names of constellations coming in various texts and their deities, see Kane, *op. cit.*, pp. 501-504; cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* VI. 3-1, for the male and the female constellations, see also *Hir. Gṛ.S.* I. 1.5, and the comment of Matṛdatta thereon.
19. See Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 505f.
20. Hastings *J. Ency. of Rel. & Ethics.* Vol. IX, p. 166a.
21. *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.S.* IV. 5.1-2; *Kauṣ. Gṛ.S.* III. 7.1-7; *Pār. Gṛ.S.* II. 10. 1-2; *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* III. 5.1-3 for other details.
22. *Pār. Gṛ.S.* II. 12.1; *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* III. 8; 75.15; *Hir. Gṛ.S.* 218.8.
23. *Hir. Gṛ.S.* I.9.3; *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* II. 18; 50.14; *Āgni. Gṛ.*S. I.3.1.
24. For which see Dange S.A., *Vedic concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, Bombay (University Pbn.), 1971, pp. 70-73.
25. According to the *Brahmavaīvarta* P., II.96.73ff, *Abhijit* is the shadow of *Śravaṇā*.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GARMENT OF THE BRIDE

A rite of giving away the garment of the bride after the marriage ritual is seen in some of the *Gṛhya-sūtras*, for example, *Aśv. Gṛ. S.*, *Āp. Gṛ. S.* and *Kaus. Gṛ. S.* and though some others like *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.*, *Pār. Gṛ. S.*, *kāṭh. Gṛ. S.*, *Mān. Gṛ. S.* do not mention this ritual. It is interesting to note the finer details of this ritual.

Āśv. Gṛ. S. lays down that having observed the vow of continence according to the proper rules, the bridegroom should give away the bride's garment to a person who knows the *Sūryā*-hymn (*i.e.*, *RV*, 10. 85).[1] *Āp. Gṛ.S.*, which gives more details, lays down that the bride's garment should be given away reciting the *mantras* coming "later in the hymn."[2] The *mantras* meant by this *Gṛhya sūtra* are *RV* 10. 85. 29-32, as can be seen from the commentary called *Tātparyadar-śana*. This commentary and also the other one on *Āp. Gṛ.S.* named *Anākulā* refer to a view which takes the present *sūtra* (*i.e.*, *Āp. Gṛ.S*, 3. 9. 11) in continuation of the preceding one, which refers, according to them, to the case of a bride, or some other woman, suffering from consumption or some such disease (*yakṣmā*) and prescribes the process of curing the same which terminates in throwing the garment away. If we read both the *sūtras* together, the sequence is :

(i) 'The giving away of the garment of the bride; and
(ii) Discarding the garment of the bride or a woman who is diseased.

But, it has to be accepted that the other woman mentioned here cannot be any other than the wife in the context of marriage; and, as such, she has no place here. Now, the *Anākula* mentions both the views; but it does not agree with the second one. It says that the *sūtra* lays stress on the condemnation of the bride's garment, which is to be "given away to the knower of the *Sūryā*-hymn".[3] The *Tātparya-darśana*, on the other hand, lays stress on the second view, and thus takes the *sūtra* as referring to the curing of the contamination (*bhaiṣajya-karma*), though it gives the first view at length.

The reason why the same *sūtra* (*Āp. Gṛ.S.*, 3. 9. 11) has been explained in two ways by the commentators is to be seen in the verses of the Sūryā-hymn,[4] mentioned above. The first group of three verses speaks of the bride's garment, which is of black and red colour, and is believed to be haunted by the evil spirit called *kṛtyā* (verse 28). This garment (*śāmulya*) is to be given away, lest the female evil spirit, obtaining the feet (*padvatī bhūtvā*) should enter the body of the bridegroom (now, husband). The concept is, indeed, interesting. With the black and red garment on the bride at the time of the union, the whole unit becomes the 'evil with the feet'. The idea is that the wife herself becomes the evil, as the garment gets *her* feet; and the husband, now, is in the most vulnerable position, in the clasp of the wife-evil! The body of the husband is said to be the haunt of ill-luck (*aśrīrā tanūr bhavati*) in contamination with this evil (*pāpayā amuyā*), as he covers his body with the wife's garment, the black-red one (verse 30). This is one aspect of the garment as is seen in *RV*. There is another aspect where there is mention of the journey (*vahatu*). It is said that when she reaches her new abode, *viz.*, the dwelling of her husband, her garment (which she wore on the way) is to be given away to a priest who knows the '*Sūryā*' (*i.e.*, the hymn 10. 85).[5] It has to be clearly noted that *RV* makes a difference between these two garments. The one mentioned above is *śāmulya* (which comes in connection with the union), while this is only *vādhūya* ('of the *vadhū*, the bride' or that which is 'of the path' or 'of the bridal procession'). This garment is described as 'harsh' (*tṛṣṭa*), 'bitter, unpalatable' (*kaṭuka*) and 'fit to be thrown away' (*apāṣṭhavat*) and 'poisonous' (*viṣavat*). But, it is not 'black and red'. Hence, this does not have the evil *kṛtyā*. This is the garment worn by the bride at the time of the marriage ritual; and with the same one she was led to the new house. This also indicates that the bridal procession started on the same day as of the marriage ritual or as soon as the last rite ended; and that the husband was not to stay in that place the next day. The order of the group of verses found in *RV* cannot be taken to vouch for the order of the ritual itself. Actually, the latter group indicates the previous ritual, and the earlier group (verses 28-30) the later ritual. This is clear from the fact that the giving away of the *vadhū-vāsas* is enjoined by the *sūtra* proper with the latter verses (*Āp. Gṛ.S*, 3. 9. 11, *uttarābhir etadvide dadyāt*). It is in the context of the *vādhūya* that *RV* mentions the *yakṣmā* (ṇi), which the *sūtra* (*Āp.Gṛ.S*, 3. 9. 10) interprets as *yakṣmagṛhītām, anyāṁ vā*. The original meaning is the evils *on the way*; and this is lost to the *sūtra*, probably due to the change of custom. And, now, the *sūtra* says that the bride should be woven round by a garment to ward off the inherent disease (if any!), and the garmant used for this purpose should be given away. It says something more here; and it adds to the original custom by saying that the same may be done in the case of any other woman (*anyāṁ vā*), which is irrelevent in the context, as we have already noted. This will also make clear that in the original belief there was no idea of *bhaiṣajya-karma* as such; it was only the warding off of a possible evil on the way, and it was only conceptual and mental, rather than actual and physical. Moreover, who would marry a bride who *has* an inherent and contagious disease!

The verses from *RV*, in this context, are found in *AV* also with slight variations.[6] They refer, obviously, to the bride's garment on the night of the consummation of the marriage. The *Kauśika-Sūtra* of *AV* also refers to the garment of the bride. But, there is an interesting detail. It says that the garment of the bride is to be given away to the 'protector of the bride' (*kumārīpālaya*) after wiping the limbs of the bride. This is where the *sūtra* gets support; but the evil is not real;

and the *kumārī-pāla* does not answer the term *anyām-vā*. *Kau.S.* further says that the garment (obviously the *vādhūya*) should be taken by the *Kumārī-pāla* by the *tumbaradaṇḍa*; and should be placed in the forest (may be attached to a tree or some other thing).[7]

The belief regarding the bride's garment is carried even to the Puranic period. According to the *Skanda-Purāṇa* the garment which is *nīlī-rakta* (dyed with the black or blue colour, or with the black-and-red colour) is to be thrown away at a distance; but such a garment is not inauspicious at the time of love-sports in the bed.[8] This refers to the garment of the first night, which is to be discarded after the night-sport. At any other time such a garment is believed to be infested with the evil.

The points to be noted from the above discussion are as follows :

1. The bride's nuptial garment is of a definite colour; it is black-and-red.
2. This type of garment is necessary for the consummation of the marriage; the other garment may be of any colour and is worn on the way.
3. After the first night the garment is believed to be infested with the evil *kṛtyā*.
4. Hence it is to be given away.
5. It is to be given away to a person who has thoroughly mastered the *Sūryā*-hymn; and this is so because the tradition of the black-and-red garment is first recorded in *RV*.

Before we close, we may note that the custom associated with the garment of the bride forms part of a general belief which warrants the performance of special rituals at the period of transition at various stages of life.[9] The time of marriage is that of transition. Even in it there are two aspects. One is that of the bringing of the newly-wed woman, and the other is the moment of consummation. The giving away of the bride's garment at both these occasions implies the warding off of the evil that might probably be infesting the woman passing on to the husband.

References

1. See *Āśv. Gṛ.S*, 1.8. 13, *carttavrataḥ suryāvide vadhuvastramdadyāt*.
2. *Āp.Gṛ.S*, 3. 9. 11, *vadhūvāsa uttarābhiretadvide dadyāt*.
3. See *Ānākulā* on *Āp.Gṛ.S*, 3. 9. 11.
4. *RV X*. 85. 28-30.
5. *Ib*., 31, 34 and 35.
6. *AV* 14. 1. 25-27.
7. *Kau.S*. 76. 1-4.
8. *Skanda Purāṇa* 4. 40. 142.
9. Hastings, *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*. vol. VIII, p.431a.

CHAPTER THREE

SĪMANTONNAYANA

SĪMANTONNAYANA is one of the most important of rites to be performed in the case of a pregnant woman. It is treated in most of the *Gṛhyasūtras.*[1] Āpastamba, Baudhāyana, Bhāradvājā, and Pāraskara expressly say that this rite is to be performed only once, i.e. at the first conception. Likewise, other later works like the *Mītākṣarā* (on *Yājñ. Sm.* I. 11), the *Smṛticandrikā* and the *Samskāratattva* say that *Garbhādhāna, Pumsavana* and *Sīmantonnayana* are to be performed only once. They quote Hārīta in their support.[2] Viṣṇu was of the opinion that *Sīmantonnayana* is a *samskāra* to be performed only once; but he also mentions that according to some it is the *samskāra* of the foetus and hence it is to be performed at every pregnancy.[3] There is, however, no uniformity regarding the month in which it is to be performed.[4]

The rite, in short, is as follows:[5] Having prepared a *sthālīpāka* (cooked rice) containing sesame and *mudga* beans (green gram), or containing rice and *mudga*, the husband offers the oblations in the house-hold fire uttering the *mahāvyāhṛtis* (*Bhūḥ*, *Bhuvaḥ*, *Svaḥ*) and the relevant *mantras*. The wife, who has already taken her bath and donned new clothes sits to the west of the fire and touches (the hand of) her husband. The husband, then, parts her hair with the upward movement. The parting of the hair in the way mentioned above is done with a porcupine quill that has three white spots, with three bunches of blades of the *darbha*-grass or three blades tied together with another one, with a bunch of even number of unripe fruits (*yugmena śalāṭu-glapsena*) of the *udumbara* tree

(*Ficus Glomerata*). While parting the hair also the husband utters the *Mahāvyāhṛtis*.[6] In addition to the things mentioned above for the parting of hair, Par. *Gr. S.* (I. 15. 4-6), *Āp. Gr. S.* (VI. 14.3) and *Gobh. Gr. S.* (II. 7. 3-8) mention the *vīratara* and a full spindle (*tarku*), with which hair is to be parted. *Mān. Gr. S.* (I. 15. 1) mentions that the husband should part the hair of the wife with a branch of the *śamī* tree having leaves on it, with the *mantra* "Agni has given back the wife" etc. (*RV* X. 85. 39). *Kāṭh. Gṛ. S.* (31. 2-5) also mentions the branch of the *śamī* having leaves on it. Baudh. *Gṛ. S.* (I. 10. 1-12) mentions barley beans, in addition to the porcupine quill with three white spots, the *darbha*-bunch and the *udumbara*-shoots.

Thus, the things used for the parting of the wife's hair are as follows:

(a) A porcupine-quill having three white spots;
(b) Three bunches of sacred grass;
(c) A bunch of even number of *udumbara*-fruits;
(d) A *vīratara*;
(e) A *Śamī*-branch having leaves on;
(f) A full spindle;
(g) Young shoots of barley.

It will be seen that all these things have symbolic value, as attested by tradition. The porcupine-quill is prescribed also for the combing of the hair of a child at the rite of *cūḍakaraṇa*; it is also prescribed to be presented by the bridge-groom to the bride at the time of marriage.[7] It has to be noted, however, that the porcupine-quill was not used as a regular comb, as suggested by Apte.[8] It was used only symbolically at certain rituals to ward off evils;[9] and it was also used to apply collyrium with (*Kāṭhaka Sam.* 23.1; *Taitt. Br.* I.5.6.6; *Śaṭ Br.* II. 6.4.5). *Taitt. Br.* compares the three white spots with three auspicious things, three vedas, three pressings of Soma etc.[10] We may mention here the three words, the three cords that are enjoined to be tied round the sacrificial posts etc., and also with the three dishes of boiled rice mentioned below.

The *udumbara*-fruits of even number has a unique significance. According to *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* (I. 22. 9-10), in this rite, the husband ties three twisted strands, to which the fruits are tucked, to the neck of the wife, with the words, "Rich in sap is this tree; be fruitful like the sappy branch of this sapful tree" (Cf. also *Pār. Gṛ. S.* I. 15.6 for this *mantra*).[11] It may be of interest to compare the belief among the Aztecs in this respect. According to them, the fruits of such trees as stick on to the trunk are believed to be the Mother-trees; the fruits represent the teats of the breasts of the "Mother."[12] The *udumbara* is of a similar species. The even number is indicative of the male-child. This is clear from the rule that the husband should approach the wife, in the days after her period, on even nights.[13] Many *Gṛhya* texts lay down that the name of a child should have even number of letters.[14] The *vīratara* is the arrow or a particular tree;[15] in any case it has the same symbolic value as that of the blade of grass or the quill; it represents the male. The spindle is used for taking the thread from the cotton, and is pointed; it also has the same symbolic value as the long quill or the upward moving blade of grass. But we may compare a ritual current among the Hindus of Baluchistan, according to which, to gain progeny, the woman is made to sit on a spinning wheel. This is because the thread indicates the line of progeny.[16] The *Śamī*-branch is already indicative of the fire;[17] and *Agni*, the fire-god is the last from whom the bride-groom is said to have obtained the bride; before him, she is said to have been with *Soma* and the *Gandharva* (cf. *RV* X. 85. 40-41). The young shoots of barley with which the hair of the bride are said to be parted indicate fertility. It is for the same reason, without doubt, that the young shoots of barley are enjoined to be placed round the bride's neck (*Baudh. Gṛ. S.* I.10. 1-12), or round the head (*Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 14.7).

Some details after the parting of the wife's hair are of interest. According to the *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* (II.7.9-12; cf. *Khā. Gṛ. S.* II. 2. 26-28), after the parting of the hair, the wife is made to look at the *sthālīpāka* of boiled rice and sesame sprinkled over with clarified butter. The husband, then, asks her, "What do you see?"; she replies. "Offspring". The brahmin women sitting by her side, then, say to her, "Be a mother of valiant sons; a wife of a living husband." According to the *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* (I.21), at this time, the wife is made to look at three dishes of boiled rice sprinkled over with clarified butter and the fourth one filled with water placed in front of the fire. The husband, then, asks her "What do you see?"; and she replies, "Sons and cattle." It is to be remembered in this context that here we have a very clear symbolism of the *mithuna* (coupling). In the Vedic ritual tradition, rice and clarified butter form a couple indicative of producing progeny; and water and fire is another couple, the latter being the male. Even in the rite of the kindling of the fire for any Vedic sacrifice, the water called *Praṇītā* and the fire was believed to be a procreative couple.[18] There is, hence, no doubt that these things required to be seen by the wife are suggestive of getting progeny on her part through sympathetic magic. It will be, hence, seen that the details of the ritual of *Sīmantonnayana* indicate the gain of the power of fertility. In fact, the act of parting the hair of the wife is symbolic ploughing; and the rite of symbolic ploughing obtains among certain tribes in the context of marriage.[19] It has to be noted that the things used at this rite for parting the hair are long. We may note a further point here. The word *purṇa-cātra*, which is rendered as "spindle", is glossed as *tarku* in the commentary. Now, the word *tarku* has the meaning of the knife also (*tarku* being actually *kartu*, fr. √ *kṛt*, "to cut"), and is actually used at the time of fixing a marriage; though this is not clearly corroborated in the *Gṛhya* tradition, the custom is found among the tribes habitating the northern fringe of India.[20]

A variant of the rite of looking at the boiled rice and ghee is to be noted. According to the *Jāim. Gṛ. S.* (I.7), after parting the hair in the fashion mentioned above, the husband fills a vessel made of bell-metal with water, and places gold in it. The wife looks at the water; and the husband asks her, "What do you see?"; she replies, "Children, cattle, good fortune for me and long life for my husband." If we remember that gold is the symbol of the sun and of longevity,[21] here we have a double suggestion, that of fertility and the sun-fluid. As fertility is mainly associated with the gain of male issues, the rite of the parting of the hair has to be understood as for the gain of male children. So it is said that this rite is to be performed on a day when a constellation having a masculine name is present.[22] As has been already noted, the even number of the bunch of the *udumbara*-fruits also indicates the gain of male children.

At the end of the rite lute-players are said to tune the *ṛc*-s. This rite, according to Kane,[23] is of a social and festive nature. This suggestion is hardly acceptable; for, no ritual-detail can be simply for entertainment or for a festivity. Festivity is only an added motive. Actually, even the tunes seem to serve as a charm as effective as the actual *mantras*. They are only an instrumental phase of the vocal charm; and it is accepted, and even prescribed, that the *mantras* are an active aid to ritual (*Ait. Br.* III.5).[24]

References

1 *Āśv. Gṛ. S. I.* 14.1-19; *Śāṅkh. Gr. S.* I.22; *Āp. Gṛ. S.* 14.1-8; *Hir. Gṛ. S.* II.1; *Baudh. Gr. S.* I.10; *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* I.21; *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* II. 7.1-12; *Khā. Gṛ. S.* II. 2.24-28; *Pār. Gr. S.* I. 15; *Kāṭh. Gr. S.* 31.1-5; *Vaikh. Gṛ. S.* III. 12.

2. Kane P. V. *Hist. of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. II-i, p. 206, n. 479.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 226, n. 521.
4. The rite to be performed in the fourth month—*Āśv. Gṛ.S.*I.14 1-2; *Hir.Gr.S.*II.1.1-2; *Bhār.Gṛ.S* I 21; *Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 14.1 and *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* I.10.1, etc.; for more details see Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, pp. 260-261; also p. 286, n. 24.
5. *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.*I. 23.2-3 and 7; *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* I.21 : 21.7; *Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 14.2; *Hir Gṛ. S.* II1.2-3; *Pār. Gṛ. S.* I.15.4; *Āśv. Gṛ. S.*I.14.3.
6. *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* I.22.8; *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* I.14.4; *Hir. Gr. S.* II.1.3; *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* I.21: 21.11.
7. Ṛam Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
8. *Social and Religious Life in the Gṛhyasutras*, Reset Ed., Bombay, 1954, p.76; Ram Gopal's objection, *op. cit.*, p. 174, n. 70.
9. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 163, under 'Comb'.
10. *Taitt. Br.* I. 5.6.
11. For the *mantra* see *Mantra-Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* I 5.1; *RV* II.32.5; *AV* VII.48.2.

12 Mackenzie D. *Myths of Pre-Columbian America*, London, 1915, p.177; the tree-goddess was called Mayauel, which was believed to be a woman having four hundred teats.

13. *Yājñ. Sm.* I. 79-80; *Manu Sm.* III. 48.

14. *Pār. Gr. S.* I.17.2; *Mān.Gr. S.* I.18.1; *Gobh. Gr. S.* II.8.14; *Baudh. Gr. S.* II. 1. 25-29; *Bhār. Gr. S.* I. 26: 27.11; *Hir. Gr. S.* II. 4.10; *Jaim. Gr. S.* I. 9: 8.7; *Vaikh. Gr. S.* 3.19: 49.10; *Āśv. Gr. S.* I. 15.5-7 says that the name of the son should have either two syllables or four syllables; *Ibid.*,—8 for even number of syllables.
15. Com. by Chandrakanta Tarkalankara on *Gobh.Gr.S.*II.7.8, Calcutta ed., 1908.
16. Masani R. P., *Folk-lore of Wells*, Bombay, 1918, p. 66.
17. According to the *Skanda P.* (I.1.4.92-96), at the time of the *yuga-kṣaya* (the destruction of the world in a particular age) *Brahmā* produced fire with two of his hands; from these hands were produced *Bhṛgu* and *Aṅgiras*, who were the aspects of fire. The fires created by these seers came to be used in Vedic sacrifices. These fires are represented by the trees *Aśvattha* and *Śamī*, the staff and slab made from which are used for the production of fire by the kindling method.
18. For, and for other pairs, see Dange S. A., *Sexual Symbolism from the Vedic Ritual*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 51-70.
19. The parting of the wife's hair with a pointed object is, probably, an imitation of the ploughing rite; see *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 289b. Actual miniature ploughing obtains as an important ritual at tribal marriages, for which see Dange S. A., *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, Bombay Uni. Pub., 1971, p. 94, also Thurston E., *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Madras, 1909, Vol. I, p. 144, III, p. 103, etc.
20. See Dh. Leitner, "Dardistan", in *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I, pp. 11-12.
21. For which see Smt. Dange S.S., "Gold in Domestic Ritual", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Mayavati, Oct. 1978.
22. *Śāṅkh.Gr.S.*I.22.6. According to this text, even the implements to be used in this rite should be of masculine gender.
23. P. V. Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
24. *Ait. Br.* III. 5. *etad vai yajñasya Samṛddham yad rūpa-Samṛddham yat karma kriyamāṇamṛgabhivadati*. Also see *Nir.* I. 16.

CHAPTER FOUR

NAMING OF THE CHILD (NĀMAKARAṆA)

The common day for the *nāmakaraṇa* is said to be the tenth (*daśamī*) after birth, according to the *Gṛhyasūtras*.[1] In this context the commentators Haradatta, Harihara and certain others understand the tenth day after the actual day of birth, while most of the commentators understand it as the eleventh, looking to the word *daśamyām*; this also appears to be correct, as on that day the period of impurity is already over.[2] This is supported by such texts as *Gobh. Gr. S.* (II. 8.8), *Khā. Gṛ. S.* (II. 3.6) and *Yājñ. Sm.* (I. 12). According to some other texts, the rite should be done in the first fifteen days after the birth on an auspicious day (*Jaim. Gṛ. S.* I. 9), or after the twelfth night, the next day (Ib.) *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* (II. 8.8) and *Khā. Gṛ. S.* (II.3.6) say that it may be performed after ten nights have elapsed after birth, or even hundred nights and even a whole year.

There are various rules prescribed by the *Gṛhyasūtras* in connection with the naming rite. According to *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* (I. 24.4) the name should start with a *ghoṣa varṇa* (the third or the fourth of a class of letters, *h* etc.); it should contain an *ardhasvara* (any of the letters from *y*, *r*, *l*, and *v*); it should have two, four, or six letters. It also prescribes that the name should end with *kṛt* suffix (verbal) and not a *taddhita* suffix (nominal). The idea in the name ending in a verbal suffix indicates the magical provision for activity. The suggestion that the name should have two, four or six letters has been given by other *Gṛhyasūtrās* also; and it is also said that the ending vowel should be long, or there should be a *visarga* (the aspiration) at the end.[3] *Āśv. Gr. S.* (I. 15. 4-9) which gives the same prescriptions as noted above, says that if the father desires the child to gain status, the name should have two letters; and if *brahmavarcas* (light of knowledge), it should be four-lettered. The name of even letters is prescribed for the boy by all the *Gṛhyasūtras*, while for the girl a name having odd number of letters is prescribed.[4] As against the prescription of *kṛt*-ending names for the boy, it is prescribed that the name for a girl should end in a *taddhita* suffix, and end in the vowel *ā*. Some prescribe that it should end in *dā*.[5] The prescription for the even and uneven number of letters get directly connected with the belief that a son is born if sexual union is done on an even night after the four days after the period; and that a girl is born if it is done on an uneven night.[6] But, it may be noted that this is only a very superfluous comparison. In the Vedic symbolism the even number was associated with the male, while the uneven with the female.[7]

It is also said that a name that has the prefix *su* (indicating "ease" or "goodness") is auspicious, as it makes the person full of status. (*Baudh. Gṛ. S.* II. 1.27 *yasmin va sv'ity 'upasargaḥ syāttāddhi pratiṣṭhitam vijñāyate*; cf. *Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 15.10). It is also prescribed that the name of a *brāhmaṇa* should end in the word *śarman*, (="blessing"), that of the *kṣatriya* in the word *varman* (="armour"), and that of a *Vaiśya* in *gupta* ("protected"), which speaks of the general concept about the various *varṇas* (*Pār. Gṛ. S.* I. 17.4). *Mān. Gṛ. S.* (I. 18.4) says that the name of a boy should be connected with a constellation or with the name of a deity; but, it also says that the direct name of a deity is to be avoided. The same is the opinion of some other texts (*Gobh. Gṛ. S.* II. 10.21; *Vār. Gṛ. S.* III. 1) who do not forbid the direct name of a deity (cf. also *Chānd. up.* IV. 4.4.; *Bṛhad. up.* III. 7.2; *Kauṣ. Up.* I. 17). Some *Gṛhyasūtras* say that the second name of a boy should correspond to that of a constellation (*Bhār. Gṛ. S.* I. 26; *Hir. Gṛ. S.* II. 4. 11-14). The name of a girl however should not correspond to that of a constellation (*Vār. Gr. S.* III. 3; *Jaim. Gr. S.* I. 9; cf. also *Manu Sm.* III. 9, which says that a girl having the name of a constellation should not be accepted for marriage).

From the various instructions regarding the naming of a child, it appears that the names for the boy indicate freedom, while those of a girl indicate dependence. We have seen how the name of a boy is prescribed to have the prefix *su*; but, what may appear rather curious is that the name of a girl with the ending *rakṣitā* or *dattā*, with a name of a deity as the first part was not favoured (*Vār. Gṛ. S.* III. 3; *Jaim. Gṛ. S.* I.9). There seems to be a double motif in naming. The first is that the name symbolizes the very person; and the name that is bad may render the person bad; or, the other way round. The belief that the name is the very presence of the person obtains widely.[8] The prescription, or rather prohibition, in the case of the girl, that her name should not have the name of a deity as the first part and the word *rakṣitā* and *dattā*, supports this. In that case, the girl may actually be in the clutches of the deity, and may not belong to her husband! This hypothesis is supported from the fact that the girl is believed to be in the control of Soma, Gandharva and Agni, sequentially, prior to her being taken by her human partner, the bride-groom (cf. *RV* X. 85.41).

Apart from the name to be used by all, there is also mention of the second name for the child. Thus, *Bhār. Gr. S.* (I. 26) and *Hir. Gṛ. S.* (II.4.11-14) prescribe two names for the child; and they explain the custom by saying that the child having two names becomes prosperous (*samṛddha*). However, they seem to restrict this custom to the brahmins only, as the word used is "*brāhmaṇaḥ*". The same belief occurs at *Vār. Gṛ. S.* (III. 1), and *Āśr. Gṛ. S.* (I. 15.10). One of these names is enjoined to be kept secret; but there is variance about this point amongst the *Gṛhyasūtras*. Thus, *Vār. Gṛ. S.* (loc. cit.) does not say that one of the names is to be secret. *Āśv. Gṛ. S.*, however, says that, after the general name is kept, the other is to be kept and this name is to be kept a secret till the time of the *upanayana*, being known only to the parents.[9] This was to be used by the boy for announcing himself in respectful salutations and hence it was called *abhivādanīya*. The custom of giving a secret name obtains widely, and among various tribes, to prevent the person being conjured through his real name.[10] On the Indian side, the concept and practice of the secret name goes back to the Vedic times. Thus, Varuṇa is said to know the secret names of the "Cows" (*ṚV* VII. 87.4). The practice of keeping another and an additional name is referred to at many places in *Sat. Br.* (cf. III. 6.2.24; V. 3.3.14; IX. 4.3.3. etc.), which refers to "*Arjuna*" as the secret name of Indra (II. 1.2.11; V. 4.3.7).

It will be seen from what has been detailed above, that the beliefs and practice about the giving of names that obtain in the *Gṛhyasūtras* form part of a general psychology of the people, and obtain elsewhere. The practice of the secret name and that of names having auspicious prefixes confirm the belief that the name was taken to be the very personality.

References

1. *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* I. 24.6; *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* 1.26:27.11; *Mān. Gṛ. S.* I. 18.1; *Pār. Gṛ. S.* I. 17.1; *Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 15.8.
2. See Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, p. 287, n. 56.
3. *Pār. Gṛ. S.* I. 17.2; *Mān. Gṛ. S.* I.18.1; *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* II. 8.14; *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* II. 1.25-29; *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* I. 26:27.11; *Hir. Gṛ. S.* II. 4.10; *Jaim. Gṛ. S.* I. 9; VIII.7; *Vaikh.Gṛ. S.* III. 19; XLIX.10.
4. *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* I. 15.4-9.
5. *Pār. Gṛ. S.* I. 17.9; Also *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* II. 8.16; *Āp. Gṛ. S.* VI. 15.11; *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* II. 1.30 etc.
6. *Manu Sm.*III.48; *Yājñ.Sm.*I.79-80.
7. On this point see Dange, S.A., *Sexual Symbolism from the Vedic Ritual*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 99ff.
8. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics.* Vol. IX, p. 135a.
9. *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* I. 15.10. After the initiation, the boy is protected by the *Sāvitrī-mantra*. The object of keeping one name (preferably *nakṣatra* name) secret seems to have been to prevent magical practices (*abhicāra*) against a person, because the *abhicāra-rite* could not succeed if the real name of a person was not known. cf. The commentary on *Khā. Gṛ. S.* (II.2.32) Also Devapāla commenting on *kāṭh.Gr.S.* 36.4.
10. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, loc. cit., p. 166a; also p. 133a.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYMBOLISM OF GOLD

The use of gold is prescribed in many *Gṛhya* rituals. Among the rites to be performed at the birth of a child, there is one of *prāśana*. *Āsv. Gṛ. S.* (I.15.1) says that when a son is born, the father should, before other persons touch it, feed the child with honey and clarified butter, in which gold has been rubbed, by means of a golden (spoon) with the verse, "I give you the Veda of honey and ghee, produced by the bountiful Sāvitrī; protected by the gods may you, of long life, live a hundred autumns in this world." *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* (I.24.3-4) says that the father should mix together either clarified butter, honey, curds and water, or pound together rice and barley, and should give it to the child to eat thrice from gold (may be from a golden spoon or a plate of gold), with the verse. "I give the Veda, produced by bountiful Sāvitrī, for a honeyed sacrifice; protected by the gods,......world". At the end of the verse the name of the child is to be inserted. *Mān. Gṛ. S.* (I.17.1-7) also contains a reference to gold in the rite named *Jātakarma*. It enjoins that the father should perform the *Āyuṣa*-homa (sacrifice for longevity, on the birth of the son). With the *Anuvāka* verse (*Mait. Sam.* II.3.4) he should offer twentyone oblations of *ājya* (clarified butter) into the fire. In the remainder of that *ājya* he should mix curds, honey and water, stir it with a piece of gold and feed the child thrice with this mixture. Then he should recite over its head the verse, "Be a stone, be an axe, be insuperable gold. You, indeed, are the Veda called Son; so, live a hundred autumns." *Hir. Gṛ. S.* (II.3.2) says that on the birth of the son, the father lays an axe on a stone, and a piece of gold on the axe; and that, after he has turned these things upside down, he holds the boy over them, reciting two verses. *Āgni. Gṛ. S.* (II.1.3) and *Vaikh., Gṛ. S.* (III.14; 45.16) give similar details in this connection. *Āp. Gṛ. S.* (VI.15.4) gives details of the *Jātakarma* and says that the father should pour honey and ghee together; he should dip a piece of gold into this mixture, tied to a *darbha*-blade. With three suitable formulae, he should administer part of the mixture to the child.

Reference to gold occurs in the context of ritual-bath, which the bride is to take at the time of marriage. On her head is placed a small circle of twisted *darbhas* (*darbheṇḍva*). Over it is held the yoke-hold, with a piece of gold kept in it in such a way that the water for bath (actually meant for lustration) flows through it touching the piece of gold. This procedure is accompanied by various *mantras*.

There is a reference to the use of gold in the context of propitiating the presiding deity of a newly built house. The owner of the house places a piece of gold into the water into which are already placed rice and barley grains. He sprinkles this water round the house going thrice round it, in the *pradakṣiṇa* way (i.e. keeping the house on his right). This is done with the recitation of *Śantātīya* hymn (*Āsv. Gṛ. S.* II. 9. 6-7).

Vaikh. Gṛ. S. (VI. 1.6) makes reference to gold in the rites of cremation. Thus, when the corpse is laid down on the funeral pyre, seven pieces of gold which have been dipped in honey, or in clarified butter are prescribed to be poured on the seven passages of breath.[2] If pieces of gold are not available, seven drops of melted clarified butter may be dropped.

The ritual-tradition teems with references to gold. Thus, in the rite of Agnicayana (piling of the fire), in the first layer the "golden man" is laid down, being placed on a gold-plate.[3] The consecrated king is required to step upon a gold-plate.[4] The priests cleanse themselves with a piece of gold held over the *catvāla*.[5] Before portions for the *Manotā* are cut, a piece of gold is placed in the *juhū*-ladle, or the ladle called *upabhṛt*.[6] When a tree is cut for preparing a sacrificial post, a piece of gold[6] is enjoined to be placed at the place where the stroke is given; sacred grass is strewn round it; and an oblation of clarified butter, touching a piece of gold is offered on that spot, with the *mantra*, "Rise, O Tree, with a hundred shoots."[7] Towards the north of the fire-place the sacrificer should place a piece of gold with the *mantra*, "Rise with your own body."[8] Again, gazing at the piece of gold, the *Adhvaryu* is to offer five spoonfuls of clarified butter into the fire-place.[9] It is said, that if the *Āhavanīya* fire-place gets extinguished after the first Agnihotra offering has been offered (but before the second offering) one should place a piece of gold upon the extinguished ember and offer the second oblation upon it saying, "*agnir-dārau-dārau-agniḥ*" (Fire in the wood, in the wood the fire).[10] Gold is *dakṣiṇā* in various rites.[11] Even in the Caraka Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice, a piece of gold, a gold-plate, a golden ear-ring, three *niṣkas* of gold, or at least a hundred *mānas* of gold are kept on the seive through which the *surā* (wine) is filtered.

The use of gold in the ritual-tradition is symbolic as is clear from the examples noted above. Many times gold symbolizes immortal life. This is clear in the case of the funeral rites. The same is the case when gold is placed in the hand while water is poured to clean some thing (*Śat. Br*. XII.8.1.22; *Kāt. Ś. S*. XIX.3.27). Gold symbolizes vital energy and vigour. But, the main purpose of using gold in many rituals is that it is the symbol of the sun. Gold is said to be Truth and the very Āditya.[13] Gold is said to be Prajāpati's vigour that went out of him and became the sun.[14] Thus, when the sun sets and the *Āhavanīya* fire is not yet taken out, a piece of gold is kept to represent the sun; for, "this piece is made of the One that shines yonder" (*Śat. Br*. XII.4.4.6). *Taitt. Br*. (I.4.4.1-3) says that the *Āhavanīya* fire of the person, whose *Āhavanīya* has not yet been drawn out (from the *Gārhpatya*), when the sun has set, longs for the *Gārhapatya*, and the *Gārhapatya* longs for the *Āhavanīya*. Now, one should carry a piece of gold tied with a *darbha*-blade, in front. Gold, here, stands for the sun. Another example is that of the waters called *Vasatīvarī*. It is enjoined that these waters, used at various stages in the sacrifice and especially at the ritual of Soma, are to be taken in jar when the sun is still shining, on the previous day of the sacrifice. The same is said of the waters called *Praṇīta*. Now, if the sun sets, they are to be collected and carried to the sacrificial ground with a fire-brand or a piece of gold (*Śat. Br.* III.9.6.9) For, it is said that this is the manner in which the form of that one (sun) that shines yonder is made[15]. This makes clear that the symbolization of the sun by gold is already accomplished in the *Śrauta* tradition itself.

The *Gṛhya* rites mentioned earlier did not feel it necessary to point out this symbolism, as they took it for granted as based on the former tradition. Thus, the use of gold in the rite at the birth (*jātakarma*) is for imbibing the solar lustre, and also the solar energy. The piece of gold touching which the water for the lustration of the bride flows represents the sun-flow. The pieces of gold placed on the seven openings of the corpse's mouth indicate the imparting of the solar energy resulting in the gain of fresh life. The symbolism went so deep, that it is enjoined not to study in a forest where there is no fire, nor gold (*Āp. Dh.* S. I.3.11.30). Whatever is offered, or got, for eating in times of drought, is required to be purified by the touch of gold or fire.[16] The same is enjoined in the case of food brought by a *Śūdra* and offered to the person of the higher class.[17]

It is obvious that the yellow shining lustre of gold was believed to stand for the golden light of the sun, or the soft flames of the fire.

References

1. *Āp Gṛ.S.* II.4.8.
2. Placing of pieces of gold on the openings of the corpse's mouth goes back to the Brāhamṇa-period, *Śat. Br.* XII.5.2.6; they were placed on a victim's head, *Śat. Br.* Tr. Eggeling, *SBE* Vol. III, pp. 402-404.
3. *SBE*, loc. cit., p. 366.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 92. A gold-piece is offered on a gambling ground, *Ib.* p. 112; a gold-piece is sewn up into the antelope-skin, *Ib.*, p. 266; a piece of gold is worn over the navel, *Ib.*, p. 267; a gold-piece is placed on a lotus-leaf in the centre of the altar in the first layer, Ib., p. 364.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 303.
6. *Śrautakośa*, Vol. I, pt. ii, p. 838.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 775.
8. *Ibid.*, Part i, p. 39ff.
9. *Ibid.*, Pt. ii, p. 701.
10. *Ibid.*, Pt. i, p. 175.
11. Thus, gold is given as *dakṣiṇā* with the offerings to the Vaiśvānara Fire, *Ib.*, Pt. ii, p. 662. This is at the first performance of the Four-monthly sacrifices on the *Upavasatha* day, Ib. p. 646. Again in the *Mṛgareṣṭi* or the *Mahāpavitreṣṭi*, gold is given as *dakṣiṇā*. These are only indicatory examples.
12. *Saty. Ś. S.* XIII.8; see also *Śrautakośa*, Voi. I-ii, p. 913.
13. See *Śat. Br.* Tr. Eggeling, SBE, Vol. III, p. 266; also p, 265.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 212, 213.
15. *Śat. Br.* III. 9.6.9.
16. *Āp. Dh. S.* I.6.18.6, Haradatta, the commentator, says that *paśu* stands for Agni.
17. *Ibid.*, I.6.18.5.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MIRROR

There are a number of rituals mentioned in the *Gṛhyasūtras* wherein a mirror is employed. Thus, in connection with the rites to be performed in the case of a child, there is one of the first glance, where the child is made to cast the first glance at the moon. *Kāṭh. Gṛ. S.*, which mentions it (38. 1-5) prescribes it to be done in the same as in the case of looking at the sun (*Ib.*, 37.1-6); but it prescribes a mirror as the fees at this occasion, with the appropriate *mantras*.[1] *Laug. Gṛ. S.* also mentions the glance at the moon on the lines of "Sun-looking",[2] prescribing five verses to be uttered purporting the gain of long life, from the moon. Even here, the gift of the mirror figures.[3] There are, however, other *Gṛhyasūtras* that prescribe the glance at the moon, without connecting it to the gift of a mirror.[4] Another occasion for the mirror is a rite at the wedding, when the bride-groom places a mirror in the bride's left hand (*Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.* I. 12.7), with an appropriate *mantra*. According to Hillebrandt, the mirror is to be placed in the left hand of the bride to enable her to comb and dress her hair.[5] It has to be noted, however, that the bride has to hold a porcupine-quill in her right hand, along with a string of three twisted threads. Hence, the suggestion of the dressing of the hair is unsound. There is no doubt, that the holding of the mirror, like many such acts in ritual-context, is symbolic. This would be clear from the use of the mirror in the case of the child noted above. Even in the context of the marriage-rite, the *mantras* to be recited make the point clear (for the *mantras* cf. *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S.*, loc. cit. 6-9).

Apart from the household rites, the mirror occurs in other contexts. Thus, at the festival known as *Indramaha*, in honour of Indra, the pole to be erected is to be adorned with mirrors, among other things. These other things include an umbrella, banners, garlands of fruits, sugar-cane-bits, flowers, toys shaped like serpents and so on.[6] *Matsya P.* mentions that the main pillars of a palace should be decorated with mirrors.[7] *Skanda P.* (VII. 3.15) lays down that the seat of the reciter of the Purāṇa texts should be elevated and studded with mirrors. This may be taken flatly as a measure for decoration; but, apart from it, there is also the belief in the mirror being the light of life; and it is this belief that seems to work at the background of such customs. In certain cases, the mirror figures in the ritual of bath in the case of idols. The idol is reflected in the mirror; and that reflection is given bath. It might be said in such cases, that the device is to save the idol from the touch of water. But, actual bath of images also obtains. The mirror-bath, hence, has something more in it. The idea of saving the idol might be accepted in cases where the idol is made of clay or of wood, as is the case with the clay-images of Durgā, at the Durgā-pūjā festival. But, this can hardly be true in the cases of established idols in some famous temples. In the Durgā-pūjā the idol is made to be reflected in a mirror, placed on a bowl made of brass or copper; water is poured on the reflection.[8] But, when the practice is mentioned in the case of the idol of Viṣṇu at Jagannāthapurī (*Skanda P.* II.2.4. 6-8), there is necessity to pause and ponder. According to the Purāṇa, the bath of the idol of Viṣṇu took in the month of *Pauṣa*. A sturdy mirror was placed in the midst of jars filled with clarified butter and milk, at night, in the *Sarvatobhadra* design (ie. a square having a gate-like opening in the middle of each of its four sides). In the mirror the idol of Viṣṇu was reflected, and bathed. It was also worshipped in the same position. One cannot say that the fixed idol of Viṣṇu could not be given a bath; and it is not impossible to bathe the idol, if it is too high, taking positions on improvised props! The belief goes beyond the mere bath; it gets associated with the concept of bath in the divine world of light, which the mirror stands for.

Another instance of the use of the mirror for bath is of the newly written manuscript. A newly written Purāṇa manuscript is enjoined to be reflected in a mirror, and given a bath, with holy waters collected in various jars.[9]

Skanda P. (I.2.26.22) records a practice, according to which the first sight of the bride-groom is to be had in a mirror. The Seven Sages are said to have seen the face of Śiva in the mirror, at the time of the latter's marriage.

The instances noted above have to be connected with the practice of using the mirror, mentioned by the *Gṛhyasūtras*. The latter stand as the basis for the practice recorded by the former. When at the "moon-seeing" rite a mirror is given as the gift, the idea is, obviously, of the identification of the moon with the mirror. The same is the case with the "Sun-seeing". In both cases, the idea is of the divine light; and the gift of the mirror stands as a symbol for the gain of continued light (life). The same has to be the motif behind the holding of the mirror by the bride. It may be noted that the moon had already stood as a symbol of new life, in its waning and coming to life again in the bright half of the month. He is said to take birth from immortality, and is invoked to bestow non-death.[10] Symbolically, the shining surface of the mirror stands for life and light alike. It is termed *prakāśa* (light). The reflection of the idol or a person in the mirror has another subtle belief associated with it. The shadow, as also the reflection, has been believed to be the very soul—a belief which obtains widely. An interesting detail from *Skanda P.* (I 1.5.50) may be noted in this connection. According to it, a person who gives a powerful mirror as a gift at a Śiva-temple, or to the follower of the Śaiva sect, becomes the attendant of Śiva after death. The idea seems to be that, by this gift the donor saves his soul from being grasped by death, keeping it secure in the care of the Lord. This is only one of many instances of the common belief that the reflection stands for the soul, and that the reflection in the mirror is the soul itself. The custom of covering the mirrors in the habitat, or turning them to the wall, at the time of a death in the house may be compared here.[11] The idea is to avoid the soul of the dead to get fixed in the mirror, and in the house, for good. When bath is given to the idols reflected in the mirror, it is to the actual divinity—the very spirit of the idol. It will be interesting to note in this connection that in Japan, according to the Shinto practice, actual worship is rendered to the mirrors, originally presented to the deities; because, these mirrors stand for the deities themselves.[12] The most original belief behind the reflection is that it is the double of the idol or the person—the 'double' (soul) which cannot be harmed as the actual body. For more clarity, we may compare a passage from the *Kauṣītakī* Up. (IV.11), "The person that is in the mirror, On Him do I meditate. I meditate on Him as the likeness." Reflection, it will be quite clear now, had a mystic belief associated with it. The earliest reference to this effect is in the concept of the Man-in-the-Eye, who is the very Creator.[13] One's own reflection in another's eye, must have served as the basis of the concept of the double, the soul. From the eye to the reflecting surface, including the mirror, is the next step. It is from this angle that the *Gṛhyasūtras* mention the mirror.

References

1. *Kāṭh.Gṛ.S.* 38.5.
2. *Laug. Gṛ.S.* 37.1-5; also 38.1-4.
3. *Ibid.*, 38.4.
4. *Khā.Gṛ.S* II.3.1-5 (see *SBE*; Vol. 29, p. 396); *Hir.Gṛ.S.*II.8.1-7 (*SBE*, Vol. 30, pp. 56-57); *Kauthuma Gṛ.S.* 12; *Vaikh.Gṛ.S.* III.20. 21 mentions the rite of *Varṣa-vardhana*, i.e. "Increase of the Lifespan". In this rite a thousand figures of the moon are to be drawn on a *sthaṇḍila* (a raised square altar); and on it the moon-god is to be worshipped (along with by flowers etc.) with water from a silver vessel and leaves of white water-lillies. A thousand brahmins are to be fed and propitiated with gifts of silver, pearls etc.
5. A. Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, Strassburg, 1897, p. 65.
6. Shastri, A.M., *India as seen from the Bṛhatsamhitā of Varāhamihira*, Delhi, 1969, p. 122.
7. *Matsya p.* 254.4cd.
8. From personal experience.

9. *Agni p*. 63.17cd.
10. *Laug*. *Gṛ.S*. 38.2-4.
11. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 696.a & b.
12. *Ibid*., p. 697a.
13. *Bṛh. Up*. IV. 2.3.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RITUAL OF THE BREATH

The *Gṛhyasūtras* mention the rite of the smelling of the son's head. Thus, *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* refers to this rite and says that the house-holder (here the father) having returned from a journey, should smell the head of the son thrice uttering the *mantra* "From every limb thou art produced; out of the heart thou art born; thou, indeed, are the 'self' called 'son'; such as you are, live for a hundred autumns."[1] In the case of the daughter this rite is enjoined to be accomplished silently.[2] As noted above, other *Gṛhyasūtras* also mention the rite.[3] *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* and *Āp. Gṛ.S.*, however, state that the rite could be performed with a *mantra* in the case of the daughter, as follows : "Thou art born from all my vital breaths; such as thou art, live for a hundred autumns".[4]

The Purāṇas are replete with references to the smelling of the head of the younger ones, especially the son, by the elders. Thus, when Dhruva returns after his penance and gaining the boon from the god Nārāyaṇa, his father Uttānapāda is said to have smelt the child's head with great affection (Bhāg. p, IV.9.44). Prahlāda is said to have been smelt by his father when the former returned after studies as his preceptor's place (Ib. VII.5.21). Nanda is said to have smelt the head of Kṛṣṇa when he learnt of the latter's exploit of killing Pūtanā (Ib. X.6.43). Pārvatī is said to have smelt the head of Kārttikeya when the latter was consecrated as the chief of the army of gods (Vāmana P. I. 31.57); and when Geneśa was born, Śiva smelt his head (Ib. 29.7.71). The Skanda P. records that when Kṛṣṇa's wife, Jāmbavatī, was about to send her son Sāmba to Hāṭakeśvara, she smelt his head (Sk.P. VI.213). The custom of smelling the head is widely seen. Thus, a Mongol father smells the head of his son (the youngest one) as a mark of affection.[5] The point really goes beyond affection; for could not the affection be also for a bit grown up children?

The act of smelling the head apparently looks as if it were a mark of affection. But when it is prescribed as rite, there has to be deeper meaning in it. Though the *Gṛhyasūtras* mention that it is to be performed at the return from a journey, it goes beyond it, as we have noted above and shall see. According to Hopkins, kissing is included in the meaning of smelling,[6] as the Vedic seers do not seem to have any separate word for "kissing".[7] A. Coomarswamy traces the custom of the smelling of the head of a child to the idea of the "sun-kiss", which includes the cencept of impregnation from the sun-rays.[8]

On close examination, the cases of smelling indicate that it is closely associated with the principle of imparting the life-breath,[9] with a belief that it would help prolong the life of person thus "smelt". The point gets support from the ritual of the kindling of the fire. As soon as the fire is kindled, the sacrificer is ordained to breathe upon it through his mouth with the *mantra* : "I bestow the life-breath upon the Immortal one" (*prāṇam amṛte dadhe*) and takes in (=inhales) a normal breath with : "I hold the Immortal one in my life-breath" (*amṛtam prāṇa ā dadhe*).[10] The same is to be seen when the sacrificer is enjoined to breathe upon the sacrificial material.[11] The idea is to make the things endowed with life, for their participation in the sacrifice as animated things. The belief is that the sacrificer himself imparts his life-principle to these things (cf. the *mantra, aham tvad asmi*). Again, when the fire is being carried to the *Āhavanīya* fire-place from the *Gārhapatya* a horse is made to stand towards the east; the *Adhvaryu* priest carries the pan containing the fire; as he carries it first he is to hold it below the knees, then upto the navel, then upto his neck; but, it is enjoined that he is never to hold it beyond his breath.[12] The exact implication of the details of this act is difficult to understand; but, from the fact that earlier the sacrificer breathed upon the freshly kindled fire thus imparting his life-breath to it, if his breath again crosses it, the act would be like taking back the breath, and imparting it freshly. This is not desired in view of the earlier act of giving the breath of life and infusing the fire within himself, with the *mantras* noted above.

Another symbol for breathing the life-breath is the utterance of the sound *Hiñ*. The *Udgātṛ* priest is said to be Prajāpati himself; he breathes the *Hiñ* sound on the head of the sacrificer. It is said that the procreative fluid is, symbolically, released by the *Hiñ* sound, thus causing new creation with the life-breath. The said priest has to utter the *Hiñ* sound over the sacrificer three times.[13] *Śat. Br.* clearly says that the *Hiñ* sound is the very life-breath.[14] Another aspect of the life-breath is the sound *Huñ*; and this sound, with this belief, is fully exploited in the Purāṇic texts. For that matter, any type of breath is believed to be the generative principle. The belief is seen in the account where Brahmā is said to have sighed which act created the various creatures, and seasons (*Śiva* P.II. 8.37). It is said that from the *Huñ* sound produced by the cow, a man was produced having the sacred thread and the pig-tail; the indication is of the birth of a brāhmaṇa (*Skanda* p. III.2.10.4). Also from the breath of the angry Rudra is said to have been produced a multitude of fevers (Ib. I-1.3.35). Any number of such accounts can be cited as examples. But, here is an interesting one. It is said that once a king named Balāśva was surrounded by his enemies, who were, in fact, his own relatives. Not knowing what exactly was to be done, he hid his face in his palms and sighed deeply. Now, from the breath that escaped from the cravices of his fingers were produced soldiers, elephants, chariots and such other things that helped him defeat his enemies (*Mārkaṇḍeya* P. 122.8.-21). The belief of the creative breath is at the bottom of all such accounts. When the imparting of breath forms part of a ritual, the same belief gets enacted. It we compare the accounts that utilize this motif of breathing and the rituals of breathing upon a particular object or on the head of a child or a younger person, it becomes clear that the same motif generates a myth in one case and a ritual in another. When the *Gṛhyasutras* enjoin the breathing upon the head, they only record the widely current practice. Breathing on the head appears to be due to the belief that it is the *uttamāṅga*, "the best part of the body", and due to the fact of the practice of blessing a person on the head. But, in the origin, breathing/smelling does not appear to be restricted to the head. It may be of interest to note in this connection that when Viṣṇu brought the earth out from water, in his boar-incarnation, he is said to have placed her on his lap and smelt her mouth (*Skanda* p. II. 1.'.94). This may be compared with the Biblical account of the creation of man from the clay and the god breathing into his nostrils.[15] The Mexican goddess, Chalchuhtlicue, who presided over the baptism of children is also the goddess of life. She is represented as holding a spinning wheel in one hand, and, in the other, a weaving implement (which is also the symbol of the span of life).[16] During the ritual at baptism the mid-wife who is said to represent the goddess takes the water and breathes upon it; gives the taste of this water(=breath-water) to the child; then the child is dipped in the water.[17] The prophet Elisha is said to have restored a dead child to life by breathing into its mouth/and nostrils (a method practised even to-day, even by doctors who render the mouth-to-mouth respiration); the child is said to have sneezed seven times and opended its eyes.[18] The association of smelling-breathing upon a person is seen from ancient Egypt also. Thus the spirit of the Abyss (Abzu) says to the primeval god Atum (who is like Hindu Prajāpati) : "Kiss your daughter, Order; put her to your nose."[19] Order is said to be first born, along with her brother, to Atum in the primeval waters. Another name of this daugher is Nut. Her brother, Shu, who is the son of Atum says: "I am Life, the son of Atum; he has borne me from his nose."[20] The identification of breath and life is complete in this imagery; and the birth from the nose attests it. Life comes out, taking birth from the nose; it has the form of Breath.

References

1. *Āśv.Gṛ.S.* 1·15.11.
2. *Ibid.*, 12.

3. *Pār. Gṛ.S.* I.18.1; *Gobh. Gṛ S.* II. 8.21-24; *Khā.Gṛ.S.* II. 3.13.15; *Hir.Gṛ.S.*II.4.16-19; *Mān.Gṛ.S*; I.18 6; *Kāṭh.Gṛ.S.* VI. 11-12.
4. *Āp.Gṛ.S.* VI.15.13, *Bhār.Gṛ.S.*I. 27.
5. *Ency. of Ref. and Ethics*, Vol. IX, p. 397a; a father in Timorlaut smells and fondles his child. Issac smelt Esau's raiment.
6. Hopkins, E.W., "The Sniff-kiss in Ancient India", *JAOS*, Vol. 28, p. 208ff. The Kyoungatha of the Assam frontier employ the noses for kissing; they say, "smell me" and not "kiss me". The Negroes sniff vigorously at the body.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 121; also *Śat.Br.* IV.5.5.11; V.1.4.15; *Ait.Br.*I.7; *Taṇḍya Br.* VII. 10.15; a father was to low as a bull (cow) while smelling, for which see *Śat.Br.* II.4.1.14.
8. "The Sun-kiss", *JAOS*, Vol.60, p. 46ff.
9. Keith, A.B. *Rel. and Phil. of the Veda and the Upaniṣads*, HOS, Vol. 32, London, 1925, p. 387.
10. See Dandekar R.N. and Kashikar, C.G., *Śrautakośa* (Eng. Tr.), Vol. I-i, Poona, 1958, p. 36.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
13. *Pañc. Br.* VIII.7.13; VII.10.15; also *Kaus. Br. Up.* II.11.
14. *Śat. Br.* I.4.1.1.
15. *Old Testament*, Genesis II.7; Kings 4.34ff.
16. Mackenzie, D., *Myths of Pre-Columbian America*, London, 210.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
18. Frazer, J.G., *Folk-lore of the Old Testament*, Vol. I, London, 1918, p. 5.
19. Clark, R.. *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1959, p. 46.
20. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

RITUALS WITHOUT THE MANTRAS

At various places in the *Gṛhyasūtras*, rituals are enjoined to be done without *mantras*, though, as a general rule, rituals must be accompanied with suitable *mantras*. The rituals without *mantras* can be classed under the following heads:

1. Rituals prescribed for *Śūdra* women :-
   (a) In the context of marriage, the general practice allowed the man from a higher *varṇa* to marry a girl from a lower *varṇa*. In such a case, the *Pār. Gṛ. S.* says that no *mantra* should be uttered in such cases.[1]
   (b) In the context of *Sarpabali* (called also *Śravaṇā* or *Śravaṇā-karma*) it is noted that when the husband goes out, the wife is to offer to the serpents for the four months of the rainy season. In this context, *Mān. Gṛ. S.* says that even the *Śūdra* wife of a *brāhmaṇa* may so offer, after cleaning her hands; but, she is not to recite the *mantras*.[2]

The reason for the rites in the case of the *Śūdra* woman to be without *mantras* is obvious. The *Śudras* had no right for *mantras*, in the period of the *Gṛhyasūtras* and even later.[3] A variety of people got mixed into the *Śūdras*, the whole group having a mixed way of utterance; and it was not thought proper for them to utter the *mantras*, that were sacred.[4] However, *Vas. Dh. S.* (IV. 3) tries to give an explanation in this case. It says that the *brāhmaṇa* was created by the creator with the

Gāyatrī metre, the *kṣatriya* with the *Triṣṭubh*, the *Vaiśya* with the *Jagatī*, but, the *śūdra* was not produced with any metre. The *mantras* require the metre; and, as the *śūard* had no metre, he had also no *mantra*. But, *Śāṅkh. Ś. S.* (XIV. 33.19) says that the metre for the *śūdra* is the *Anuṣṭubh*.

2. Rituals in the case of a maiden :-

(a) According to a rite, when the father comes home after staying out, he smells the head of his son with the *mantra* "You get born from every limb of mine." According to some other texts the father utters some other *mantras* also. But, in the case of girl this rite is to be performed without any *mantra*.[5] However, *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* and *Āp. Gṛ. S.* prescribe specific *mantras* for this rite in the case of a girl.[6]

(b) In the context of the rite of taking food for the first time, in the case of a child, a *mantra* is to be recited in the case of a boy; but, in the case of a girl, no *mantra* is to be uttered (*Āśv. Gṛ. S.* I. 16. 5-6).

(c) In the case of the rite called *Cūḍākaraṇa* or *Caula* (the first tonsure), though the rite is prescribed for both, in the case of the girl, no *mantras* are to be recited, at the actual cutting of the hair. However, *mantras* are prescribed while offering oblations into the fire.[7]

The directions in the case of the girl recorded in the *Gṛ. Sūtras* are the basis of the rules laid down later by Manu and Yājñavalkya. Manu says (II.66) that in the case of the girl, all rites from the *Jātakarma* (rite at the birth) to the *Caula* are meant for her bodily purification; but, they are all to be done without the *mantras*. The rule of Yājñavalkya is the same (I.13). It can be surmised that in the *Sūtra* period, there was no education for girls; hence, there is little provision for *mantras* in the rites meant for them. It may, however, be noted that some texts do indicate that the girls, and women, had right for the study of the Veda. Some *Gṛ. Sūtras* say that at the daily offering of water, Gārgī Vācaknavī, Vaḍavā Prātitheyī and Sulabhā Maitreyī are to be offered water.[8] Also, in the context of the *Utsarga-vidhi* (the rite at the completion of the Vedic studies) a seat was to be reserved for Arundhatī, along with the Ṛṣis.[9] This would indicate that in the *Sūtra*-period, women were known as having gained status in the Vedic studies. Moreover, some *Gṛ. Sūtras* refer to the education of a girl as a desirable qualification at marriage, as is clear from *Mān. Gṛ. S.* and *Vār. Gṛ. S.*.[10] *Kāṭh. Gṛ. S.* (XIX. 2.3) refers to the celibacy in the case of a girl for ten years and twelve years.[11] It is also recorded that in the bygone years, girls (women) did undergo the ritual of initiation and studied the Vedas, and the *Savitrī-vacana* (which is the utterance of the sacred *Gāyatrī-Sāvitrī*).[12] This would make clear that in the *Sūtra* period, there was no restriction on women to learn the Vedas and perform the daily rituals with the proper *mantras*. The only restriction seems to be that they should be taught the Veda and the *mantras* by the father, brother or the paternal uncle (*Ib.*) Yet, the question remains, why are the rites in the case of women without *mantras*.

The *Gṛ. Sūtras*, as noted above, seem to be divided on this point. There is a deeper shade to this picture. If we trace back to the times from *RV*, there seems to be doubt regarding the stability in the case of the woman. It is said that the mind of a woman is difficult to be controlled (*RV* VIII. 33.17); their hearts are compared to those of the wolves, and friendship with them is said to be unstable (Ib. X. 95.15). A woman is said to be "falsehood".[13] She is termed "*nirindriyā*" and "*a-dāyādī*", the epithets that led to misunderstanding.[14] These utterances that had led to an air of censure to be gathered round the woman got percolated in the *Śūtra* period also; and the *Dharma-sūtras* denied freedom to women.[15] The *Smṛtis* followed the lead.[16]

3. The Rites in connection with Prajāpati :-

In the case of the rites concerning Prajāpati, the *mantras* are not to be uttered loudly. Thus, in the context of the rite called *Homa-karaṇa*, the sacrificer is to draw a continuous line of clarified butter dropped from the *darvi* (ladle) from the north-west of the *Gṛhyāgni* (the house-hold fire) to its south-east. While doing so he utters the name of Prajāpati and Manu, in his mind; not loudly. On the other hand, while offering to Indra, he says loudly, "To Indra; Hail !" (*Hir. Gṛ. S.* II. 2. 12-16; cf. *Jaim. Gr. S.* I. 3:3.20). *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* (I.4) prescribes a similar rite, and says that the sacrificer offers the first oblation of clarified butter, remembering Prajāpati only in the mind, and without saying *svāhā*. The same occurs also at other *Gṛ. Sūtras.*[17]

The *Brāhmaṇa* texts explain the reason for not uttering a *mantra* loudly while offering to Prajāpati by the account called, traditionally, *Aham-bhadra* ("I am important"). The account has the competition between Mind and Speech as to mutual superiority. When they are unable to decide between themselves, they resort to Prajāpati. Prajāpati supported the plea of Mind that if he (it) does not feed Speech with ideas, she could not express. Hence, Speech got angry with Prajāpati and said that she would not help in rites meant for him; hence it is that his rites go without *mantras.*[18] This explanation does not really hit the point. The reason seems to be that Prajāpati is mainly associated with progeny in the sacrificial ritual, and has a strong sexual tone about him. Sex requires secrecy; hence, the muteness about Prajāpati. Actually, there is hint to this explanation in the ritual tradition itself, and the mode of the *mantras* in relation to Prajāpati is termed "*upāmśu*".

4. In certain cases, out of the three times for a *mantra*, the *mantra* is uttered only for the first time, while on the two later occasions it is not uttered (*Kāṭh. Gr. S.* VIII. 1-10; *Śāṅkh. Gṛ. S. V.* 16. 1-11). An example in this case is the rite called *Paridhikarma*, or *Śānti-karma*. In it the performer applies a mixture of collyrium and clarified butter to the eyes of the ladies in the house with a bunch of *darbha* grass. The rite forms part of the funeral rites. Now, when he applies it for the first time he is to utter the *mantra*; but, for the next two times, which is done according to the injunction, this is done mutely (the *mantra* is *RV* X. 18.7). This is done to avoid repetition, says the tradition; and the technical name for this

method is "*Samaya*".[19] However, this cannot be said to be a rite devoid of a *mantra*, as the *mantra* is actually uttered for the first time.

References

1. *Pār.Gṛ.S.* I.4.11.
2. *Mān.Gṛ.S.* II.16.6.
3. See Kane, *op. cit.* Vol. II-i (2nd Ed.), Pune, 1974, pp. 158-9.
4. Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasutras*, Delhi, 1959, p. 126.
5. *Āśv.Gṛ.S.* I.15.11-12; *Pār.Gṛ,S.* I.18.1-6; *Gobh.Gṛ.S.* II.8. 21-24; *Khā.Gṛ.S.*II 3.13-15; *Hir.Gṛ.S.*II.4.16-19; *Mān.Gṛ.S.* II.18.6; *Kāṭh. Gṛ.S.* VI. 11.12.
6. *Bhār.Gṛ S.* I.27, *Āp.Gṛ.S.* VI. 15.13.
7. *Āśv.Gṛ.S.* I.17.18; *Gobh. Gṛ.S.* II.9.21-22; *Sāṅkh.Gṛ.S.* I.28.22.
8. *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.S.* IV.10.3; *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* III. 4.4 *Kauṣ. Gṛ.S.* II.5.3.
9. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
10. *Mān. Gṛ.S.* I.7.6, *Vār. Gṛ.S.* X.5. In these places education has the third place, not the last.
11. On this, the commentator Devapāla says that the father should not keep the girl in his house after she attains the twelfth year. This may be true in the times of Devapāla; the *Gṛ.S.* in question does not say any thing of this sort.
12. cf. Smṛticandrikā, Samskāra-kāṇḍa, ed. Mysore, p. 62. *Yat tu hārītena-uktam dvividhā striyo brahmavādinyaḥ sadyovadhvaśca| tathā ca yamaḥ-purākalpe tu nārīṇām mauñjībandhanam iṣyate| adhyāpanam ca vedānām sāvitrīvacanam tathā.*
13. *Mait. Sam.* I.10.11.
14. *Taitt. Sam.* VI.5.8.2. Here the epithet *adāyādīḥ* refers to their not being eligible for the share of the Soma-juice; it has nothing to do with their actual share in the property. But, *Baudh. Dh.S.* (II.2.53) and *Manu. Sm.* (IX. 18) misinterpretad the text, as saying that women are not fit for the ancestral share.
15. *Baudh. Dh. S.* II.2.53, *Gaut.Dh.S.* XVIII. 1. *asvatantrā dharme strī Vas. Dh.S.* V. 1 *asvatantrā strī puruṣapradhānā.*
16. *Manu Sm.* IX. 18. *Ib.* 2ab *asvatantrāḥ striyaḥ kāryāḥ puruṣaiḥ svair-divāniśam Ib.* 3d. *na strī svātantryam arhati.*

17. *Baudh. Gṛ.S.* I.3.26-28; *Āp. Gṛ.S.* I.2 [illegible]; *Mān. Gṛ S.* II.2.13.
18. *Śat Br.*I.4.1.8-12; *Taitt. Sam.* II.5.14.
19. cf. *Ait. Br.* VI. 27.
20. See *Ṛgveda Prātiśākhya*, Ed. Pashupatinatha Sharma, Calcutta, 1927, p. 143.

CHAPTER NINE

MUSIC IN RITUAL

At various places in the *Gṛ. Sūtras* we have references to the employment of music; this is in addition to the usual recitation of the *mantras*; and the ritual-songs, together with the instrumental music is meant here. Some of the references to such music are from the context of the ritual of marriage; some from the rite called *Sīmaṇtonnayana*, which is to be accomplished in the case of a pregnant woman. Even accepting that in such cases music might indicate the general atmosphere of gaiety in the house, one cannot believe with Kane[1] that the sole purpose of such music is the expression of gaiety and nothing more, as far as the latter ritual is concerned. It has to be accepted that music, in such cases had a deeper symbolism. Before we come directly to the instances of the employment of music from the *Gṛhyasūtras*, it would be better to go back and see how the *Vāṇa* figured in the Vedic rituals. It is pertinent to note that the *vāṇa* figured in the ritual of the extraction of Soma, in addition to the usual *mantras*. While the shoots were pressed, with an invocation to the God Soma to ooze out for Indra (*RV* X. 114.1d refrain), it was also customary to play on the *vāṇa* with a loud tone, as a charm (Ib. IX. 97.8. *āṅguṣyam pavamānam sakhāyaḥ durmarṣam sākam pra vadanti vāṇam*). The whole concept behind the earth-drums and the tuning of the musical instrument by the priest at the Mahāvrata is nothing but a charm, together with the various activities (*Śat. Br.* IV. 6.4.2ff). A simple expression of joy does not require the instrument to be duly consecrated, as is the case with the *vāṇa*; it is consecrated with the *mantra*, "*prāṇāya tvā, apēnāya tvā, vyānāya tvā* *ullikhāmi*", thus giving it the status of a living vocal apparatus (*Ait. Ār*. V. 1.4). The *Ait. Ār*. (III. 2.5) further says that the *vīṇā* is nothing else than the instrumental replica of the human body. If that is so, the tune of the *vīṇā* or the *vāṇa*, or, for that matter, of any such musical instrument, is an aid to the ritual in the same way as are the *mantras*. The *mantras* are said to be *abhirūpa* in relation to the *vidhi* (ritual) (*Ait. Br.* III.5). In the same way the musical tunes at rituals have to be taken as *abhirūpa*. They have the status of the auspicious aid.

In the case of the marriage-ritual, there is ample evidence to show how the employment of music had a magical and auspicious purpose. There is a ritual prior to the actual marriage, called *Indraṇī-karma*, wherein there is the identification of the bride and the goddess Indraṇī on the one hand, and that of the bride = Indraṇī = Earth, on the other.[2] The idea behind this worship of Indraṇī=Earth is that the bride also may be "fruitful". In this rite the bride is made to play on the instruments called *nāḍī*, *tīṇava*, paṇāvā, mṛdaṅga and others. Prior to starting playing on them, she is enjoined to sprinkle sandal-water on them; and this playing on the said instruments is done by her on the tunes of a popular folk-song (*gāthā*)[3]. The instrument is invoked as follows: "Speak auspicious Hail, O Drum"; this she says to the *dundubhi*; then, to the small drum called *gomukha*, she says, "O Gomukha, may the damsels play in joy, in auspicious mood along with Indraṇī."[4] The implication is clear. Indraṇī has arrived; and the friends of the bride should be joyous and play with her. The very address to the musical instruments is indicative of the belief that they have life, and that they are to aid the occasion, by supplying a charm. *kāṭh. Gṛ. S.* (XXII. 1) enjoins that eight women, having their husbands living, should feed the brahmins and should sing suitable songs on the tune of the said instruments; four such women may also dance. *Mān. Gṛ*. (I. 9.29) enjoins that on this occasion four women, having husbands alive, should play on the instrument called Nandī.[5] *Mān. Gṛ. S.* (I.10.7) goes into some details in this context, such as the sprinkling of the bride with water through the hole of the yoke, making her take a seat under the yoke of a chariot or a cart.

The water that is to come through the hole should have the touch of gold, as it trickles through. This 'gold-water' is believed to be the sun-water,[6] that would have the power of imparting fertility to the bride.[7] In the context of this "sun-lustration", the *Mān. Gṛ. S.* mentions the *vāṇa*.[8] In the context of the rite called "mounting the stone," (*āśmārohaṇa*), after it and before the offering of the fried grains (*lājā-homa*), *Pār. Gr. S.* enjoins that the bride-groom should sing a *gāthā*; and this *gāthā* is said to be for excellent success to women.[9]

An important mention of playing on the *vīṇā* (lute) and music comes in the context of the rite of *Sīmantonnayana*.[10] This rite is to be performed for the gain of the male child, in the fourth month of pregnancy. The main act in this rite is the parting of the hair of the wife by the husband with a porcupine quill, a unit of three blades of sacred grass and a short stem of the *Udumbara* (tree) having fruits of even number also figured in it. The even number is indicative of the male child, as the uneven indicates the female child. The last part of the rite is the tying of the bunch of the *Udumbara* in the neck of the wife by the husband, and the playing on the lute by two other persons. The husband says to the persons who play on the lute: "Sing of the glory of a king, or one who is more valorous" (*Pār. Gṛ. S.* I. 15.7).[11] The text mentions further that the meaning of the *gāthā* to be sung at this time is as follows: "Some alone is our king; O River ! (here the name of the river in the vicinity of which this ritual is accomplished is to be inserted). May the authority of those staying on your bank be unchecked" (Ib. 8).[12] In this connection, *Āpa. Gṛ. S.* (VI. 14.5-6) enjoins two verses. One was to be sung among the Śālva, people while the other was meant for the Brahmins. *Hir. Gṛ. S.* (II. 1.3) and *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* (I.21) do not mention the players on the lute, but mention the *mantra* to be recited. The *mantra* from *Hir. Gr. S.* mentions the Gaṅgā,[13] while *Bhār. Gr. S.* mentions the Yamunā. The purpose of mentioning the name of the particular river on the bank of which the rite is accomplished was that the progeny of the performer of the *Sīmantonnayana* rite should abide on the bank of the same river unobstructed.

The lute-players and the ritual-singers, thus, played a very important part in the rituals; the employment of music was not only for gaiety; it had an emotional basis, and worked as a magic charm. The custom obtains even to-day in folk-songs.

References

1. P.V. Kane, *Hist. of Dh*, Vol. II-i, Poona, 1974, p. 223.
2. See Dange A., *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, Bombay, 1971, p. 24, 174; also by the same author, *Aśvattaācī Pāne* (Marathi), Nagpur, 1974, p. 138.
3. *Kāṭh. Gṛ.S.* XVII. 2,3.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Mān.Gṛ.S.* I.9.29.
6. See "Gold in Domestic Ritual".
7. Dange S. A., "*Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*", pp. 73 ff.
8. *Mān. Gṛ.S.* 1.10.7. On this the comment of Aṣṭāvakra is, *bāṇo vādyaviśeṣaḥ Śaṅkhādiḥ* Obviously the Comment is inapt, in the days of the *Gṛhyasūtras*.
9. *Pār.Gṛ.S.* I.7.2.
10. For symbolism in this rite see "*Sīmantonnayana*".
11. *Pār.Gṛ.S.* I. 15.7; *Kauṣ. Gṛ.S.* I. 14.9;
    Śāṅkh. Gṛ.S. I.22.11-22; here two lute-players are mentioned.
12. Also cf. *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* I. 14.6-7.
13. *Āgni.Gṛ.S.* II. 1.2 has the same reference.

CHAPTER TEN

THE BOAT IN THE PITṚMEDHA (FUNERAL RITE)

In connection with the *Pitṛmedha* rite of the Atharvavedins the *Kauśika Sūtra* prescribes a very interesting detail, in the concluding part of the rite. It says that after the funeral pyre has been piled up, and all are about to depart from the funeral ground, seven furrows are to be made (near the funeral pyre) and they should be filled with water. The furrows and water therein, obviously, stand for rivers; for, it is, then, enjoined that a boat (in miniature), in which a piece of gold and some coin are placed, is to be placed or rowed in the water of one of the furrows. Then a *mantra* is addressed to the deceased, purporting that he should ascend "the boat of the sun".[1] The *mantra* clearly indicates that the boat placed in the water in the furrow-river is for leading the soul of the dead to the sun. This is supported from the fact that a piece of gold is placed in the boat; and gold is the sun-metal in ritual-symbolism.[2] The reference to the grains in the boat shows that the soul of the dead has been given provision for the long journey.

It may be noted that this ritual is not isolated, though it may not be practised in the modern times, as a general rule. However as we shall see later, in some parts of India traces of the same are noticed. Reverting to the deep past, we come to a hymn from *RV* (X.135), which hints at boat-burial, though in the case of a boy of tender age.[3] The boy is referred to here as *kumāra*, which, most probably, indicates his age to be less than five years.[4]

As compared to the instances of boat-burial in ancient India, those found all over the world among ancient tribes are remarkably more. Thus, among the American tribes canoe-burial is frequent, especially among those in the southern continent. The Egyptians from the Fifth to the Tenth dynasty had models of ships included in the furniture of a tomb. Also among the ancient Scandinavians ships were very much in use in the funeral rites.[5]

Coming to India, on the main land in the province of Assam, traces of canoe-burial are found. In these cases, terracota boats were found at Nabagraha (Nau-graha, "Boat-house"), at Gauhati, and on the ground of a cemetery. A boat found at Nabagraha was made of fine clay, and was uniformly baked. It was 2.95 mts. long and 85 cms. wide; it was 25 cms. deep and 14 cms. thick. Even smaller boats are found in the campus of the Gauhati University.[6] Most probably, these boats were used for the purpose of placing dead bodies in them, though actual bones were not discovered in any of the boats so found. These boats are ascribed to the period from the 7th to the 12th century A.D. Even today canoe-burial is known to exist among some of the Naga tribes.

It seems that the custom of canoe-burial was the off-shoot of the riverine culture; it must have been very much prevalent in ancient times, as one of the easiest ways of disposing the dead. Another phase of this custom may be seen in the belief that the soul has to cross a river before reaching the other world—the world of Death. This belief is seen in the form of the river Vaitaraṇī, which the dead is supposed to cross, as is clear from the Purāṇic records. It is also said that the sinners find it difficult to cross the Vaitaraṇī.[7] In this connection, *Garuḍa P.*[8] mentions a very interesting rite. According to it, a miniature boat was to be given to a brahmin in funeral ceremonies. This boat was to be prepared out of a sugar-cane (a small piece thereof). This "boat" was to be placed, in a jar filled with clarified butter and the jar was wrapped with a thread; this liquid served as the Vaitaraṇī. An idol of Viṣṇu was also placed in the "boat". The original idea (and practice) was, probably, to place the replica of the dead in the "boat"; this gave place to the idol of Viṣṇu as the soul of the dead.[9]

The detail in the *Kauśika Sūtra* has to be viewed with all these parallels. The furrows and the boat, thus, have to be taken as indications of the boat-buials, since lost.[10]

References

1. *Kau.S.* 86.25-26. The *mantra* is *AV* XII. 48c.
2. See Dange S.S., "Gold in Domestic Ritual", *Prabudḍha Bharata*, Oct. 1978.
3. Dange S.S., "A Lost (!) Funeral Custom from the Rgveda", *Proceedings of the AIOC.*, 28th Session, Dharwar, 1976.
4. *RV* V. 78.9; X. 79.3.
5. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics.* XI, p. 472b.
6. News Item, *The Times of India*, Bombay, 14th Dec. 1970.
7. *Mb. Ādi*, 169.22.
8. *Garuḍa P.* II.4 36-37.
9. That the soul of the dead is symbolized by Viṣṇu is a well set point in the Hindu tradition. Thus, the rite of *ātma-śrāddha* (funeral for self) where a person offers *piṇḍas* to himself in his life time, to save others the trouble after his death, comprises the placing of the *piṇḍa* in the hand of the figure of Viṣṇu, at Gaya; such a *piṇḍa* may also be placed for anybody else, so that he may get it after death (*Vāyu P. Uttara*, 46.86-87). According to another rite at the *ātma-śrāddha*, the performer gives a jar to the *brāhmaṇa*, which is generally given away for the dead; but, in the place of his name (which would indicate his soul), he utters the name of Viṣṇu, as Nārāyaṇa (*Garuḍa P.* II. 17.47d *ghaṭam pretasya nirvapet*; and 48ab *nārāyaṇeti svam nāma sampuṭastham sam uccaret*). Viṣṇu is represented by the thumb in the ritual of the manes; and it is enjoined that the officiating priest at this ritual should pierce his thumb in the *piṇḍa* to be offered to the dead (*Agni P.* 163.12).
10. According to Caland, the later idea of the Vaitaraṇī, and that of the boat to cross it is due to the belief in the inability of the soul to cross the water. For this view of Caland see Keith, A.B., *Rel. and Phi. of the Veda and the Up.* HOS. Vol, II, London, 1925, p. 422, n. 4,

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WINE AND THE FEMALE ANCESTORS

Among the rites for the manes, the *Anvaṣṭakā* has unique importance, as it is marked by the use of wine (*surā*). The rite, which is called *Anvaṣṭakā* or *Anvaṣṭakya*, is to be performed after the *Aṣṭakā*, as the very name suggests, and is to be performed in respect of the *Pitṛs*.[1] Wine marks the offerings to the female-ancestors. *Pār, Gṛ.S.*, *Āśv. Gṛ. S.*, and *Kāṭh. Gr. S.* mention an interesting detail in this connection. According to these *Gṛhyasūtras* when *piṇḍas* are offered to the manes in the *Anvaṣṭakya* rite, they are offered also to the female ancestors, i.e. mother, paternal grand-mother and the paternal great grand-mother; and *surā* is offered to only the latter group.

The details mentioned by the *Gṛhyasūtras* noted above are as follows. *Pār. Gṛ. S.*(III. 3. 10-11) lays down that when the *Piṇḍas* are offered to the famale ancestors *surā* and water is to be poured into the pits made for the occasion. One should also offer collyrium, salves and garlands. *Āśv, Gṛ. S*, (II.5.1-8) says that to the wives of the respective manes (father, grand-father and great grand-father), *Piṇḍas* are to be offered with the addition of *surā* and the scum of boiled rice. These are to be offered into the pits made on the western side, and *piṇḍas* only are to be offered to the male ancestors into the pits made on the eastern side. *Kāṭh. Gṛ. S.* (65.7.8) prescribes *surā* to be sprinkled about the *piṇḍas* meant for the female ancestors, with a churning stick (*mantha*). The *Piṇḍas* meant for both the types are, then, to be given to the servants for being eaten, or may be thrown into water or fire; or, *brāhmaṇas* may eat them.[2]

The point is why should *surā* figure along with the *piṇḍas* offered to the female-ancestors? The *Dharmasūtras* condemn drinking of *surā* in unequivocal terms, as being one of the five grave sins,[3] and prohibit it,[4] though *surā* figures in the Sautrāmaṇī[5] and some stray rituals,[6] and these rituals have to be taken as exceptions. Though there is indication in *Ṛv*. of *surā* being drunk by respectable people (VII.86.6), even by the later Vedic period it fell to the background; and even in the Sautrāmaṇī, as mentioned at the *Taitt. Br.* the remnants of *surā* were not drunk by the priests, but were given to a *brāhmaṇa* hired for the purpose, or were poured over an ant-hill.[7] The *Śrauta Sūtras* also show general *taboo* for it. *Āśv Gṛ. S.* (III.9.5.6) says that, at the Sautrāmaṇī, the priests only smelt the remnants uttering a verse (which is *Vāj. Sam.* XIX. 35, and which indicates that *surā* is mixed with *Soma*). The Sautrāmaṇī does not mention male and female ancestors separately; and the ancestors to whom *surā*, or *Soma*-mixed *surā*, is offered come as group. The mention of the offerings of *surā* to the female-ancestors in the *Anvaṣṭakya*, as noted above, hence, poses an interesting point, and has to be probed.

Kane says that it is difficult to account for the mention of *surā* in the offerings to the female ancestors; but, he seeks to give an explanation. He suggests that, "it is possible that women drank (perhaps secretly) liquor even when their husbands had given up the practice owing to the force of public opinion or that in those days (before the *Gṛhyasūtras*) inter-caste marriages being allowed, the women ancestors might have been *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya* women and so were not unfamiliar with drinking."[8] Kane is right in pointing out that the directions in the *Gṛhya-sūtras* run counter to the prevailing sentiment[9] not only of *Kāth. Sam.* and the Brāhmaṇa texts,[10] but also to the unanimous prescriptions of the *Smrtis.* But, his whole suggestion needs further scrutiny.

As suggested by Kane, women might be drinking liquor secretly, or they might have been *kṣatriya* or *vaiśya;* but, in the *Anvaṣṭakya*-ritual there is no special mention of the female-ancestors being of that caste, nor is there any distinction sought to be made. Again, it is rather intriguing to find such a reference in a ritual. Even if only three *Gṛhyasūtras* mention *surā* being offered to the female ancestors, the reference is pertinent; for, it might suggest that the practice was wide, and was retained only by these three. As such, it is necessary to probe the ritual-setting for *surā*. In this connection, it is to be noted that *surā* figures in the pre-wedding rites. *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* prescribes that on the previous day of the wedding, after the bride has been washed with water mixed with the powder of *klītaka*, barley and beans, a woman who is affectionate towards her should besprinkle her thrice on the head with *surā* of the first quality in a manner that her whole body gets wet.[11] The *mantra* to be recited at this time is, "Kāma ! I know thy name ; Intoxication thou art by name" etc. (*Mantra Br.* I. i 2) ; "bring hither N. N.". With this *mantra* the name of the bride-groom is to be uttered ; and the *mantra* should end with the word *svāhā*. Another detail is that with the following two verses, the bride's private parts are to be washed by her female-relatives. Other *Gṛhyasūtras* mention the use of water only in the context of these rites. *Mān. Gr. S.* (I.8.11) lays down that the bride should be sprinkled over with water poured from a brazen vessel. The same text further says (I. 10.7) that the bride should be made to sit under the yoke of a chariot or of a cart at the rite. *Kāth. Gr. S.* (21. 1) lays down the lustration of the bride, with water poured through a strainer having a thousand holes, by four unwidowed women, with the recitation of the *godānika mantras* ; both these, and similar practices, being for the symbolic fructification of the bride, she is identified with *Indrāṇī*, the symbol of the ploughable field. And the rite is aptly termed *Indrāṇī-karma*.[12]

The mention of *surā*, instead of water, in such a way as would drench the body of the bride to the *upastha*, and a special care for the latter, would indicate that it is the earlier phase of the rite ; and water came only later as a more sober method, as the rite was to be performed before all. It is to be noted that the *mantras* at the wedding mentioned by *AV* refer to *surā*.[13] and there is also the mention of the private part of *Mahānagnī*.[14] which is the symbolic name of the great naked Earth (*mahānagnyā jaghanan*), which has a subtle similarity with the bride's 'part' to be drenched by the women. The third object mentioned is the dice. All the three (*surā*, *akṣāḥ* and the *jaghanā* of *Mahānagnī* are invoked to be besprinkled by the *Aśvīns*' with the latter's lustre (*varcas*). The *Aśvīns* are invoked to protect the bride with the same *varcas*. *Surā*, thus, stands for lustre and fructification ; and, in ritual, is associated with married or marriageable women. The prototype of such women being *Mahānagnī*, the fullness of womanhood, *surā* appears to have been prescribed in the ritual for the female-ancestors for the continuation of fertility and properity, through the woman, in the family of the performer. The three texts mentioned earlier continued the practice; others left it, for reasons not necessary to dwell upon. It would, thus, be clear that the detail of offering *surā* to the female ancestors has to ✓ be compared with the mention of *surā* in the marriage-rites pertaining to the bride. We may cite another example in this connection to show that the offering of *surā* is as special with the rites of the marriage as with the one connected with the female-ancestors. Apart from the lustration of the bride with *surā*-mixed water, as noted above, an offering of *surā* is prescribed at the Indrāṇī-karma. Thus, *Śāṅk. Gr. S.* (I. 11.4.) states that in the rite mentioned above, four or eight women, having their husbands and children alive, should be offered vegetables, food and *surā*, and these women should perform a sort of dance four times before the bride ; the dance can be nothing else than a charm for fructification for the bride.

About the *Sautrāmaṇi* there is another point to be noted. As noted above, in it *surā* was offered to the *Pitṛs* as a group.[15] But, though it is not mentioned specifically, they seem to be both male and female. In this connection, an interesting detail mentioned by Śaṅkha-Likhita may be noted. According to it, a person would never be free from the debt to his mother unless he performs the Sautrāmaṇī.[16] This would indicate the offerings to the *Pitṛs* at the *Sautrāmaṇī* were inclusive of the female ancestors. A change from the Sautrāmaṇī to the *Anvaṣṭakya* is that in the latter *surā* is exclusively meant for the female ancestors.

We have noted that *surā* is symbolic of fertility. Another point that may be noted in this connection is that *surā* is prepared by fermentation from germinated grains, such as rice, barley or parched grain serving as yeast.[17] It is not improbable that the motif of fermentation gave rise to germination in the woman, and to the act of foetus-forming. The point is corroborated by *RV*, where it is stated that the state of pregnancy is when the womb gets fermented (X.86.23 *yasyā udaram āmayat*); and we may also compare the concept of the *āmā* cow (*RV* III. 30.14; IV. 3.9 etc.). This would strengthen the conjecture that *surā* was introduced in the rituals mentioned above as a charm for fructification on the basis of sympathetic magic. In the Sautrāmaṇī, the offerings of *surā* to the *pitṛs* might have been a separate part originally,[18] and was tucked on to it through the association of *surā* with the female ancestors. In later times *surā* appears as a prominent feature in the worship of the Mother-goddess; and here also there seems to be no doubt that it percolated from the ancient *Mahānagnī* on the Vedic scene. In the Ṣākta and other Tantric cults, it is prominent as one of the five *makāras*.

It will be very interesting to note that wine and its intoxicating effect figure in the philosophy of the Lokāyatikas; and, as noted by Mādhava, the author of the *Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha*,[19] the Lokāyatikas say that the four elements... Water, Air, Earth and Lustre..., though themselves insentient, produce the sentient (*caitanya*) when combined together, just as rice, water and molasses produce wine having the intoxicating effect, even though they in themselves, separately, do not have that quality. It should make clear that the effects of wine were closely associated with the sentient principle in common belief, and crept into philosophical discussions also by way of a *dṛṣṭānta*. Even disagreeing with the philosophy of the Lokāyata or the Carvāka school, we cannot bypass the reflection of folk-belief therein.

To sum up, *surā* ritually sprinkled upon the bride in the Indrāṇī-karma, served to the unwidowed women in the same rite, and associated with the worship of the Mother-goddess has the same motif. It has its seeds in the days prior to the Sautrāmaṇī, the performance of which is said to be a must for the pacification of the mother (and, probably, the grandmother and the great-grand-mother), and the roots may go yet in the remote past. It certainly goes back to the time of *RV*, which speaks of *surā* being sprinkled from a hundred jars filled by the *Aśvins*, through the hooves of the virile Horse, the SUN, so that *Purandhi* may get fructified (*RV* I. 116.7).[20]

References

1. For the deity, number and the time of the *Aṣṭakas*, see Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, pp. 414-417.
2. The Commentary of Devapāla and the *Paddhati* of Brāhmaṇabala say that the *Piṇḍas* that do not have *surā* (i.e. those offered to the male ancestors, see *Kāṭh. Gṛ.S.* 65. 6) should be given to the brahmins, while those having *surā* (i.e. of the female ancestors) be given to the servants, Niṣādas or may be thrown into water.
3. *Baudh. D. S.* III. 5. 5. 6; *Ib.* III. 6. 6. 18; *Vas. D. S.* I. 19-20; *Manu Sm.* IX. 23. 5.; *Yājñ. Sm.* III. 227. also 253.
4. *Gaut. Dh. S.* III. 26; λ. 15; *Baudh. Dh.S.* II. 1. 1. 17-21.
5. Kane P.V., *Hist. of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, pt. II, pp. 1224-28.
6. *Kau. Sū.* 11.10; *Ait.Br.* 37.4; when a king has undergone a solemn coronation ceremony, the *purohita* places in the hand of the former a vessel of *surā*.
7. *Taitt. Br.* I. 8. 6, *Āp. Ś. S.* XIX. 3. 3. This is quoted by Śabara on *Jaim.* III. 5. 15; *Satyāṣāḍha Ś. S.* XIII. 8. 28-31. *Śāṅkh. Ś S* 15. 15. 1-14.
8. Kane, *op. cit.*, pp. 794-795; brackets are his.
9. *Ibid*, p. 795.
10. *Kāth. Sam* XII. 12; *Śat, Br.* V. 1. 5. 28; also V. 5. 4. 21.
11. *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* II. 1. 9-10. According to Oldenberg, SBE XXX, p. 43, n.. *surottama* means *surā* prepared from molasses; vide *Gṛhyasaṅgraha* II. 16. Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa, the commentator of this *Sūtra* cannot appreciate the idea of *surā* being used in this ritual Hence, he refers to *Nighaṇṭu* I. 12 and says that *surā*, here, is the synonym of water. Even Chandrakant Tarkalankar explains it as "*udakena uttamena*," in his commentary on *Gobh. Gṛ. S.* II. 1. 10, pointing out that even the touch of wine would need expiation. Ram Gopal rightly points out that *surā* means, here, 'wine'; and the import of the *mantras* supports it.
12. Dange, Sadashiv A., *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, Bombay 1971, pp. 24.; 174.
13. *AV* XIV. 35-36.
14. *Mahānagnī* symbolizes the great earth spread far and wide, waiting to be fructified by the divine fluid, rain; see Dange,

op. cit., pp. 25 ff; 68 ff; also his, *Sexual Symbolism from the Vedic Ritual*, Delhi. 1979, pp. 201 ff.

15. Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 1226. On the *Dakṣiṇa* fire a vessel having a hundred holes, covered with a hair-strainer and gold, and containing the remnants of the cups of *surā*, was hung by means of a *śikya* and the trickling drops of wine were offered to the *Pitṛs* called *Somavat*, *Barhiṣad* and *Agniṣvātta*, with mantras from *Vāj*. Sam. XIX. 52-60.
16. Kane : *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 580; also n 1356, where the words of Śaṅkha and Likhita are quoted.
17. *Kāty*. *Ś.S*. XIX. 1. 20-27; *Āp*. *Ś*. *S*. 5. 7-11; *Baudh*. *Ś*. *S*. XVII. 31-32; *Mān*. *Ś*. *S*. V. 2. 4. 2-6.
18. In the *Sautrāmanī* sacrifice the deities are *Aśvins*, *Sarasvatī* and *Indra*. To these are offered cups of milk and wine, and beasts are slaughtered for them; see Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pt. II p. 1224.
19. *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*. Anandashram Poona, 1966, p. 2. Also *Brahmasutra śāṅkara-bhāṣyam*. Bombay 1938, p. 851—*caitanyam mada-śaktivat*.
20. For *Purandhi* see Pischel, *Vedische Studien*, Vol. II. pp. 202-216, Bloomfield M. *JAOS* XVI, p. 19. She is the goddess of plenty, according to almost all scholars. In the passage referred to here, the expression about her is *aradata*, which would indicate "tilling" or "ploughing"; cf. *RV* I. 117.6 where the same expression occurs with a slight change, and in the place of *surā* we have *madhu*.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE VENI

The parting of the wife's hair forms a part of a ritual after marriage. It also occurs in the rite called *Sīmantonnayana*, which is prescribed in the case of a pregnant woman. The *Mān. Gṛ. S.* (I. 12. 1-7) points out that in the house of the bride, after the marriage, the bride-groom addresses the *mantra*, "This bride is auspicious" (*sumaṅgalīr iyam vadhūḥ*, *RV* X. 85.33) to the on-lookers and those who have been invited, when the latter depart. He, then, parts the bride's hair with a porcupine quill having three white spots, or with a blade of *darbha*-grass having three shoots. He anoints her hair with a significant *mantra*[1], and braids the hair. A thread made of wool is used for this purpose; and this thread has to be from the wool of a living ram.[2] Both then eat curds and honey, or the sacrificial food. In this connection, the *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* (I. 7. 16-18) mentions the un-tying of the locks of the bride's hair, if they are already tied according to the custom of the region. The lock on the right side is to be un-tied first, with the *mantra* "Here do I release you from the noose of Varuṇa" (*RV*. X. 85.24), and that on the left with the next verse. There is, however, no reference here to the tying up again of the loosened locks. The idea is to release the bride from the nooses of Varuṇa, and may be compared with the belief that she was possessed by Varuṇa (among other gods) prior to her marriage. The point of the husband being associated with the hair of the wife, however, has to be noted. Another important association of this sort comes in the context of the rite called *Sīmantonnayana*. The *Mān. Gṛ. S.* (I. 15.1) says that when the wife is sitting on the *darbha* grass to the west of the fire, the husband first anoints her hair with butter and then parts it with a porcupine quill having three white spots, or with a twig of a *Śumī*-tree with leaves on. The rite is mentioned by almost all *Gṛhyasūtras.*[3] It appears that the anointing of the hair of the wife, or the parting thereof, has special significance; the quotation from the *Mān. Gṛ. S.* given above would make this point clear. The parting of the wife's hair indicates also the act of ploughing, the latter ritual being necessary in certain tribes.[4] The touching of the hair has been a privilege only of the husband; and the hair were not to be arranged during the period of the absence of the husband. We often have glimpses of the *Proṣita-bhartṛkā* type of woman in the Sanskrit dramas and poems, having the *eka-veṇī* as the hair-arrangement in such period, Sītā in the *Uttara-rāmacarita* and Śakuntalā in the *Abhijñāna Sākuntalam* being ready examples.[5] The *Proṣitabhartṛkā* was not allowed to loosen her *veṇī* by herself during the period of absence of her husband.[6] From the words of the Yakṣa in the *Meghadutam* it appears that the *veṇī* of the wife was to be arranged by the husband prior to his departure from the house,[7] and it was the privilege of the husband to untie it after his return.[8] There are many references to this detail in the Sanskrit literature.[9] As a usual practice the husband often arranged the hair of the wife. Though the *Gṛhyasūtras* are not quite clear on this point, the Purāṇas attest it. Thus, both Kṛṣṇa and Śiva are described as arranging the hair of Rādhā and Pārvatī, respectively. It is also said that the greatest joy of a married woman is the arrangement of her hair by the husband.[10] This would indicate that the association of the husband with the hair of the wife was all along believed to be for her fortune. When the *Gṛhyasūtras* mention the release of the bride from the fetters of Varuṇa, at the release of the hair by the bride-groom the basis of the concept appears to be this belief.

It will be only in the fitness of things in the context of the present discussion to know the exact nature of *veṇī*. It appears that the *veṇī* comprised, the long streaming hair tied unceremoniously with a single string at the end. No oil was to be applied to the hair in this condition, and the hair became coarse, some dangling onto the cheeks. The condition of the Yakṣar's wife is the same.[11] Hair in this condition would dangle down; and the condition of Vāsavadattā, who is the *Proṣitabhartṛkā*, is said to be the same.[12] This was the *ekaveṇī*, which is only another form of the dangling hair but for a single knot somewhere, may be at the end or just at the start of the hair. This explains the *dīrghālakam mukham* of Vāsavadattā, or the *vilola-kabarīkam ānanam* of Sītā (at the *Uttararāmacaritam*, III. 4). This type of *ekaveṇī* would not hinder the *Proṣita-bhartṛkā* from taking bath upon the head when necessary. This *ekaveṇī* could not have been a single-braided arrangement of hair;[13] for, in that case, the woman would have been required to untie the braid for her monthly bath, by herself. Where, then, would be the significance of the husband's privilege, and intense desire, to return home to untie the *veṇi*?

There is another point. As the *ekaveṇī* suggests a partial, and time-bound, separation from the husband, the *mukta-veṇī* (completely loose hair, without any knot indicating an attempt to tie them) denoted total separation from her husband, which is widowhood. Thus, we hear about the loosely flowing hair of Gāndhārī's daughters-in-law and the wives of the dead warriors.[14] In the drama, *Ūrubhaṅga*, Duryodhana with his thighs broken, is grieved to see his wives with hair visibly flowing in a free stream.[15] Draupadī, the heroine of the *Veṇīsamhāra*, is seen to be keeping her hair in the same fashion, loose![16] She is, thus, *mukta-veṇī*, as she decidedly wants to show that she is without her husbands for the time they do not avenge her insult.

It will be seen that the untying of the hair of the bride at the marriage-ritual, and the symbolic parting of the wife's hair by her husband has a long tradition of symbolism. The hair of a woman had, thus, a very close association with not only the existence of her husband but also with his special privilege. It is this background that, most probably, stands at the basis of the custom of removing the hair of the widow;[17] for, where re-marriage is forbidden, hair did not have any significance for her, in the total absence of her husband. The custom of *mukta-veṇī* is, thus, supposed to be the fore-runner of the custom of total removal of hair in the case of the woman. It went beyond the normal concept of sacrificing the hair for a beloved, and near person; it is intertwined with the sacred conjugal status.

References

1. Mān. *Gṛ. S.* I.12.3.
2. The *mantra* for this act is, *Ib.*, 4. The ram is for fertility; Indra is said to be the "ram of Medhātithi", *RV* VIII. 2.40; Jaim. Br. II. 79 etc.
3. See "Simantonnayana".
4. For ex. See Thurston E. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Madras, 1909, Vol. III, p. 103; also Vol VI, p. 355; see also Dange Sadashiv A. *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, Bombay, 1971, p. 94.
5. *Uttararāmacaritam*, III. 4b. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* VII. 21.
6. The *proṣita-bhartṛkā* is thus described—*nānākāryavaśādyasyā dūradeśam gataḥ patiḥsā manobhavaduḥkhārtā bhavet proṣitabhartṛkā* cf. Hārita 9. by Mallinātha on *Raghu.* XIV. 12. Also *Nāṭyaśāstra* XXI. 54 cd *veṣo vai malinaḥ kāryaḥ śirṣcāpyekaveṇikam Sāhityadarpaṇa* III. 204—*tatrāṅgacelamālinyam'ekaveṇīdharam Śiraḥ yājñ. Sm.* III. 84.
7. *Meghadūta, Uttara* 32.
8. *Ib., Uttara* 39—*abalāveṇimokṣotsukhāni.*
9. *Kumāra-Sam.* II. 61; *Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha* 33.35; Raghu. XIV. 12.
10. For kṛṣṇa, *Brahmavaivarta P.*, *Śrīkṛṣṇakhaṇḍa* 57.17-24 for Śiva, Ib. 45.16.
11. *Meghaduta, Uttara*, 31.
12. *Svapnavāsavadattam* V. 10.
13. Mirashi V.V. however, feels that *ekaveṇī* is the hair-style of single braid. Annual *No., Vidarbha Samshodhana Mandala*, Nagpur, 1974, p. 178.
14. Cf. *Mahābhārata, Strī*, 16.18; 17.25; 18.2; 21.6; 23.35; 24.7.
15. *Ūrubhaṅga*, 38, the word used is *prakāśīkṛtamūrdhajāni.*
16. *Veṇīsamhāra*, I. 18cd.
17. *Skanda P.* IV. 4.19ab. *Vidhavākabarī bandho bhartṛbandhāya jāyate.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SYMBOLISM OF THE NUMBERS THREE AND SEVEN

The *Gṛhyasūtras* refer to many numbers in the ritual-context. Here we study the most popular of the numbers, namely Three and Seven. To take, first, the ritual of marriage, the most striking example in this context is that of the *Saptapadī*, which is a rite referred to by almost all the *Gṛhyasūtras*. *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* (I.7.19) says that the bride-groom leads the bride in taking seven steps in the Northern direction, with the words." "Be of one step for food; of two steps for strength; of three steps for prosperity in wealth; of four steps for happiness; of five steps for progeny; of six steps for the seasons; be a friend with seven steps" (So be devoted to me). *Pār. Gṛ. S.* (I.8. 1-2), *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* (I.4.28), *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* (I. 17; XVII. 6), *Hir. Gṛ. S.* (I. 21. 1), *Āp. Gṛ. S.* (II.4.16), *Vaikh. Gṛ. S.* (III.4: 38.11) *Jaim. Gṛ. S.* (I. 21:22.5), *Kāṭh Gṛ. S.* (25.42): *Mān Gṛ. S* (I.14. 18) and *Kaus Gṛ. S.* (76.21-24) also give the formula to be recited, in this context. As is clear, the things mentioned at each of the seven steps indicate the necessities of life. *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* (I. 1.29) and *Hir. Gṛ. S.* (I. 21.2).[1] point out that the bride takes the seventh step, and just then the bride-groom recites the *mantra*." By seven steps we have become friends; may I attain your friendship; may I do not be separated from your friendship". According to Kuhn, the custom of taking seven steps together on the part of the bride and the bride-groom is of Indo-Germanic origin.[2] It may be noted, however, that the custom need not be taken as originated among the Indo-Germanic people for that matter. Among the Aztecs, where this influence is to be taken as very remote, a variation of the custom appears. Here, as in the Vedic rite, the bride/groom takes the bride round the fire seven times, thus following the motif of the number Seven.

The motif of friendship brought about by taking seven steps together is to be noted from the *Atharva Veda*[3] also; and the saying "*satām hi sāpta-padīnam sakhyam*" is quite famous. The seven steps at the marriage-ritual, obviously, stand as a symbol for continued friendship; and this for the whole life, in happiness or in sorrow. This would also show that the marriage for the Hindu was never subservience; it was a tie of friendship, which presupposes equality. The number seven in such contexts indicates totality. This could be supported from other examples also. Thus, the Fire-god is said to have seven tongues of flames, or has "seven sisters" (*RV* I. 71.7; at I.164.3 we have the seven "sisters" of the Sun-god). We have also the seven demons in a group (*Ib.* X. 120.6 *sapta dānūn*). Such expressions are not to be taken literally to mean only "seven". The same is the case with the famous, and oft referred to, expression "*sapta-sindhavaḥ*", which does not indicate only the five rivers in the Panjab and two more including the Kubhā and the Sarasvatī. We may also compare the concept of the "seven Regions" of the earth (*Ib.* IX. 114.3;I. 12.16), where the same concept of totality is seen. In fact, no clear mention of the exact seven worlds is seen prior to the *Muṇḍaka Up.* (I.2.3). In later times, that of the Purāṇas, according to some Purāṇas, the number of hells is also seven.[4] The expanse of the belief in the idea of totality, denoted by the number Seven, could be gathered from the fact that even the accounts of the Buddha are associated with it with remarkable frequency. The new-born Bodhisattva is said to take seven steps, as he ascends to the heavenly world, on a seven-gemmed ladder. There are seven jewels associated with the Buddha; there are seven sacred places at Vaiśālī and Rājagṛha each, and seven ramparts and seven palm-trees in the city of king Sudarśana; there are seven terraces in the region named Sukhāvatī, and so on.[5] Not only in the faiths related to the Indian soil, but among the ancient Egyptians also the belief in the Seven persists. Thus, Osiris has seven forms.[6]

The instances noted above clearly indicate that Seven indicated totality for the ancient people. How exactly the number became sacred is not quite clear, in the absence of a definite reference anywhere.[7] Even the ancient Egyptian sources do not divulge anything in this respect. But, there is an indication in the Ṛgveda, howsoever faint it may be, to the construction of the total cosmos; and here Seven is indicated to be auspicious and also 'total'. The basic concept behind the symbolism appears to be the concept of "three". Two units of "three" plus One appear to have given the concept of Seven.

The first ever concept of "three" seems to have come from the three worlds: Earth, Mid-region and Sky. This was from actual experience, rather than any abstract speculation. It is said that the sacrificer rises to the Ultimate One region after traversing the (three plus three=) six regions (*RV* X. 14. 16 *ṣaḍ ūrvī ekam id bṛhat*). Three worlds that are actually seen plus the three beyond (in concept), beyond the seen got settled as the basic belief. Now, to these Six, One supreme was added, as the One that remains far beyond ! This could be seen in other spheres also. Thus, for example, in the sphere of the metres, the most important metre is said to be the *Gāyatrī*, which has three *padas* of eight letters each. The extension of this unit into seven becomes the most powerful metre, the *Śakvarī* (from—*sak*, "to be able"). The concept of the primeval "Three" (or, the triad) has the basis of the Earth, the Sky and the column that keeps them apart. This support came to be known as the Mid-region (*antarikṣa*), as it stays (*kṣa* √*kṣi*, "to stay") in the middle void (*antari*). In the ancient Egyptian belief the three principles are represented by the divinities Geb, Nut and the supporting god Shu, who is their father.[8] In the Vedic field it is the same, only Shu being replaced by the god Indra or Agni, that separates the two "parents" ! From here, seven is a later step. It should be of interest to mark that the first mention of the seven steps comes, in the Vedic field, in the context of the purchase of Soma. Here a cow figures; and she is to be bartered for the shoots of Soma. This cow is also made to take seven steps in the Northern direction. The dust at her seventh foot-print is gathered and is given to the wife of the sacrificer to be placed in the house; this is for prosperity. As the dust is being given, it is sprinkled over with consecrated water which is made to touch a piece of gold. It is then divided into three parts; out of them, one part each is to be placed at the *Āhavanīya* and *Gārhapatya* fire-places; and the third is given to the sacrificer's wife, as noted above (*Śat. Br.* III. 2.3. 1-10). In the place of the cow, in a variation, a courtesan was employed.[9] The detail at the *Gṛhyasūtra* closely tallies with that from the *Śrauta* tradition. In the *Śrauta* tradition, the cow stands for a woman, who is Speech herself, which is sent to the Gandharvas to bring Soma from; but the earlier tradition of beliefs is that Soma was in the heavenly region; thus, it is clear, that the Cow (Speech) was sent to heaven itself to bring Soma from, which fact is corroborated from the myth of the metres being sent to heaven to bring Soma (*Śat. Br.* III. 2.4.1ff). This would show that the seventh step is the region of heaven, the One beyond the Three +Three, as noted above. The number Seven, thus, marked the total concept between the seen earth and the unseen heaven. In other words, it stood for totality; and, in the context of the marriage rite, it suggested total friendship.

As we have noted, the number Three seems to have been the basis for the number Seven, the former being doubled and being added by One, for ritual efficacy. This has been worked upon by the *Gṛhyasūtras*. Thus, in the rite of *Śīmantonnayana*, which is to be performed in the fourth month of pregnancy, the husband parts the hair of the wife three times with a porcupine-quill; this quill has three white spots (or rings); and the parting is accomplished with three bunches of the *kuśa*-grass. Sometimes, however, the parting is done four times. When the parting is being done, he is made to utter the words, "*Om Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Svaḥ*". This, with the three spots and thrice utterance appears to have co-relationship (see chapter on *Sīmantonnayana*). In another context, *Taitt. Br.* (I. 5.6) ordains that the sacrificer should get his head shaved with a porcupine-quill having three spots first touching the head. The reason given there is that, in the case of the gods three things are auspicious: the three metres, the three pressings of Soma (daily), and the three worlds. Out of the things mentioned above, as being sacred to the gods, those of clear observation and of primary importance are the three worlds. The division into three worlds leads to the occasional grouping of the three gods and the three worlds: the sun in the heavenly world, Vāta in the Mid-region and Agni on the earth (*RV* X. 158.12). The division is well rooted (cf. *Mait. Sam.* IV. 2.12; *Nir.* VII. 1 etc.). In the context of the sacrificial ritual, in spite of various numbers, Three has a unique status. If one scrutinizes the occurrences of the numbers in *RV*, Three and Seven have a larger number (each) than any other number. Next come Five and Ten. Triplication of Three is also a marked frequency; also that of Seven. Thus, three goddesses are invoked at the *Āprī* Hymns, namely Iḍā, Bhāratī and Sarasvatī; the *Śakvarī*, as noted above, are Three into Seven; the stalks of the *darbha* grass are seven, or three into seven (twentyone); twentyone are the bricks for a general fire altar; and we have the *Trikadruka*, which is a unique sacrifice;[10] the name might also indicate the three vats of Soma.

The *Gṛhyasūtras* point out that the rite of *Aśmārohaṇa* (ascending the stone), *Lājāhoma* (offering of fried grains) and *Pariṇayana* (leading the bride round the fire) are to be each performed thrice.[11] *Pār. Gṛ. S.* (I.7.4.) enjoins that, along with the three rites mentioned above, two more—*Pāṇi-grahaṇa* and singing of the *gāthās*—are also to be performed thrice. The *Gṛhyasūtras* prescribe a period of nine days for impurity after the birth of a child (symbolizing the period of the complete formation of the foetus prior to birth). This may not have any relationship with the number Three, apparently; but, impurity after a death in the family, includes sleep on the ground for three days in the case of near relatives. It was customary to circumambulate the place of the burial of the bones thrice; and three stones were to be thrown into the pit for the burial.[12]

References

1. Cf. *Āgni. Gṛ.S.* I.5.4; *Āp. Gṛ .S.* II. 4.17; *Vaikh.Gṛ.S.*III.4: 38.10.
2. Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, p. 237.
3. *AV* V. 11.9. A seer prays to Varuṇa, "Give me now gifts you have not so far given; you are my friend by seven steps".
4. Mārkaṇḍeya p. 12.3-39 and the Padma P. Uttarakhaṇḍa 227-228 mention these hells.

5. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. 9, p. 408b.
6. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1959. p. 167.
7. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, loc. cit., p. 413a.
8. Rundle Clark, *op. cit*, p. 48.
9. *Ait.Br.* I.57; on this point see Dange Sadashiv A. *Vedic Myths in Social Perspective*, Hoshiarpur, 1982, p. 37ff.
10. Dange S.S., "*Trikadrukebhiḥ patati*-An Interpretation", *Proceedings* of the AIOC, 27th Session, Kurukshetra, 1974; also *Vishveshvarananda Indological Journal*, XIII-ii, Hoshiarpur, 1975.
11. *Gobh.Gṛ.S.*II. 2.9; *Khā. Gṛ.S* I.3.25; *Āp.Gṛ.S.* II. 5.7-10; *Baudh. Gṛ S.*I.4.27-31; *Bhār.Gṛ.S.*I.16; 17; *Hir.Gṛ.S.*I.20.5.7; *Kāṭh.Gṛ.S.* 25.33-34.
12. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 364-367.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SIGNIFICANCE OF DICE

It is well known that the *Sūtras* were averse to gambling, or playing with dice. The authors of the *Gṛhyasūtras* suggest ways and means to avoid gambling. Thus, in the context of the building of a house for dwelling, *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* gives various instructions to keep away the tendency of gambling. It suggests that the main hall, where people could usually gather together, should be constructed on a place sloping to the south; because it is believed (by tne people) that in such a place the young gamblers quarrel and die permaturely (*Āśv. Gr. S.* II. 7. 9-10). Thus, if a *sabhā* is a must, it should be so constructed that it would be useless for the playing of dice. This would also indicate that the construction of an apartment for gambling was the fashion of the day for the cultured; and, yet, a safe-guard is envisaged! The belief in the bad effects of gambling is clear in the statement, in the context of the selection of the bride, that if a girl selects a lump of earth brought from the gambling hall, along with those from other places, she should be avoided; for, the indication is that she would herself be a gambler (may be, actually or in tendency).[1] *Gaut. Dh. S.* (XV. 17) excludes a gambler from the list of persons to be invited for dinner at a *śrāddha* ceremony. *Baudh. Dh. S.* (II. 1.2.8) declares playing with dice as the first cause of impurity.

On this background, it is worth noting how dice, or the game of dice and the dice-board, is enjoined in certain rituals. Some of the *Gṛhyasūtras* prescribe a ritual for curing a child suffering from epilepsy with the help of dice. Such a child is enjoined to be ushered into the gambling-hall through an entrance other than the usual one. Then it is laid on its back on the dice that are cast there. The child is, then, sprinkled over with the mixture of curds and salt. A gong is beaten and certain formulae are recited to end the rite. This procedure is repeated; and it is done thrice a day, i.e. in the morning, at the noon and in the evening.[2] According to *Pār. Gr. S.* (II. 10. 17), in the context of the *Upākarma*, the teacher should offer into the fire as many sesame grains as he desires the number of pupils, by means of the dice-board.[3] At this time he has to recite the Sāvitrī *mantra* or the *anuvāka* "*śukrajyotiḥ* . . ." etc. (*Vaj. Sam.* XVII. 80). *Āp. Dh. S.* (II. 10.25. 12-13) enjoins on the king to have an assembly-hall built. Here a dice-board and an even number of dice are to be made available; and pious and truthful gentlemen (*āryāḥ*) are asked to play.

Playing of dice is enjoined by certain *Śrauta-sūtras* in certain rituals. Thus, in the *Rājasūya*,[4] the king's kinsmen and the *Pratiprasthātr* priest mark out a place;[5] this is meant for dice-play in a hut specially constructed on it for the purpose. Five dice are handed over to the king, and he is struck lightly with the sticks from the sacrificial trees. The umpires for this game are the *Saṅgrāhitr*, the *Bhāgadugha* and the *Kṣattr*.[6] They are appointed by the king himself. The game is so played that the best throw comes to the king and the worst to his kinsmen, who are to play with him.[7] It appears that the game required pieces of gold also, more than a hundred or a thousand in number.[8] The king is made to win necessarily.

In the ritual of *Agnicayana* also, the host (*yajamānā*, the sacrificer) is made to win. While handing over to the sacrificer a hundred dice, the *Adhvaryu* priest says to him, "Do thou play a cow against rice-grains; do cut the joints without injury". Then the sacrificer is made to win the highest throw, i.e. the *Krta*. He then gets up. Then the others play. The cow that is earlier brought into the hall is, thus, won by the sacrificer, and is immolated.[9] *Vār. Śr. S.* (I.4.4) mentions, in this context, that the dice are to be poured (on the board), and a piece of gold is to be placed on them. According to *Āp. Śr. S.* (5.19-25) the *Adhvaryu* should hand over a hundred dice to the sacrificer and should ask him to play in such a way that four dice remain. This indicates the win; and the cow is immolated. At this rite, a horse is said to be the sacrificial fee. *Mān. Ś. S.* (I.5.5.7) prescribes the offering of dice in the context of the winning of the cow at the *Agnyādhāna*. According to the rite, as it occurs here, a new piece of cloth is spread, with its hems pointed to the north, on the dice-board. Four hundred (*catuḥśatam*) dice are poured on it. As the 'gamblers' sit ready to play, gentlemen stand around them. As the dice are placed in the centre of the board, and a piece of gold is placed on them, an offering of dice is made with the *mantra* "The holder of the vow has taken his seat" (*ni ṣasāda dhṛtavrataḥ*, which is *RV* I.25.10). The *mantra* is obviously selected due to the word *sāmrājyāya* in it, which suits the ritual supremacy in the case of the sacrificer. In the case of a *Kṣatriya*, some dice are offered into the *Sabhya* fire with the *mantra* "May the god Ahirbudhnya harken to us" (*RV* VI.50.14). The sacrificer asks the cow to be brought in; and the *Adhvaryu* gives him a hundred dice. The latter takes them and says to the 'gambler', "Make me the winner of the cows". In *Lāṭ. Ś. S.* (4. 10; 12) also we have similar information.

Baudh. Ś. S. (II.8) points out that the dice-board is placed to the south; and fortynine dice are to be cast on it. It is struck on the south with the *sphya* (wooden sword); and, thereby, the evil powers are believed to go away. The sacrificer and his three sons sit round the dice-board——the father in front, the middle son to the west, the eldest to the south, and the youngest to the north. The father takes twelve dice and wins. The eldest and the middle son take twelve each, and win. Whatever of the dice remain (i.e. thirteen now) are pushed to the youngest son (indicating that he has lost the game, because he has uneven number of dice). If only one son is there, the mother (i.e. the wife of the sacrificer) becomes the third party. If no son is there, the two players are only the sacrificer and his wife. At any rate, the remaining number of dice after the division appears to be uneven, to indicate the loser. The ritual-game at *Baudh. Śr. S.* (mentioned above) comes in the context of the *Gopitṛyajña*. After the game, a cow is immolated with the *mantra* "I fetch you for the Pitṛs, for the Pitāmahas and for the Prapitāmahas" (indicating the three in the line).

The details noted above show that in the ritual the king, or the sacrificer, was made to win the *Kṛta* throw, which signified the even number of dice. Probably, the player could pick up the required number of dice, without an actual throw,[10] so that nothing be left to the chance and bad luck, this being the ritual as against the actual play where dice had to be thrown.[11] *Kṛta* signified the lucky throw,[12] while the *Kali* signified the unlucky one.[13] However, *AV* takes the *Kali* to be the lucky throw.[14] The *Pañcikā-dyūta* was played with five dice or five ivory-pieces. When no dice remained after division, it was *Kali*. When four dice remained, it was *Kṛta*; and so on. There was, probably, no sign on the dice; but the total number was the criterion.[15]

It is not necessary to see the other details here,[16] such as colour etc. The question is why the dice-play, censured otherwise, should have an important place in ritual? The answer lies in the very nature of the game. The throw can make or mar the fortune of the player *just by chance*. The dice are not controllable; for, it is difficult to have the desired throw—provided that one is not deceitful! This belief is indicated in the famous Gambler's hymn of *RV* (X.34), where it is said that the dice are not afraid of the wrath even of the mighty, and that even the lord of men salutes them (*Ib*., 8 *ugrasya cin manyave nā namante rājā cid ebhyo nama it krṇoti*); also the dice are invoked to befriend the gambler (*Ib*., 14). The texture of the hymn does not so much show that it is for avoiding gambling as for propitiation of the dice, as man is helpless in their clutches![17] It is common experience that, like wine and sex—the other sources of vice—the dice had a great control on men. Hence, like the two, they came to be sublimated in the ritual context, the dice coming as a divine prop for desired victory. This is clear from *AV* where the feminine lustre of the bride, the dice and wine are brought on par; and the Aśvins are invoked to protect the lustre of the newly wedded girl with the lustre of the dice and wine, along with that of the cow.[18] The immolation of the cow at the ritual-game of dice indicates the propitiation of the dice, rather than a simple offering to other deities. The dice are described as *babhru* in colour (*RV* op. cit., 5 *nyuptāś ca babhrave vācam akŕataṇ*, and 14 *anyo babhrūṇām prasitau nv 'astu*). The cow appears to have been of the tawny colour, to suit the colour of the dice, though the colour of the cow is not clearly stated. The detail may be compared with the one in the rite of the purchase of Soma, where the *Somakrayaṇī* cow, in exchange of which Soma is purchased, is said to be of tawny colour and having yellowish eyes (pupils), as Soma is her counterpart (cf. *Śat. Br.* III.2.4.1ff; cf. *Ait. Br.* 1.27). It is to be noted that the dice are compared with fire (*RV* X.34.9 *divyā aṅgārā*), which is, obviously, due to their colour, said to be *babhru* earlier. This detail has to be particularly noted, in view of the fact that the dice-play occurs prominently in the context of the establishing of the sacrificial fire (*Agnyādhāna*). This would show that the dice were held in awe, and in veneration due to their being an aspect of the fire-god. The unique power of the dice in making a man rich or poor instantly, without any obvious cause, gave them the veneration they gained in popular belief; and, the priests could not but use them in important rituals.

We might not be wrong in going a step further and adding that things and actions generally censured in common life get a place in ritual for the queer influence they cast on the human mind. The case of the dice is similar. There is mention of the supreme divinity of the dice in the context of the *Puruṣamedha* where *Kitava*, *Ādinavadarśa*, *Kalpin*, *Adhikalpin* and *Sabhāsthāṇu* are offered, symbolically, to *Akṣarāja*, *Kṛta*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Āskanda* (*Vāj. Sam.* 30.18).[19] The importance of the dice is further indicated from the fact that the various names of the eras (*yuga*) are originated from the names of the dice, as they occur even in the Vedic tradition, where these names do not indicate the *yuga*-s.[20] In popular custom also the belief in the power of divination played an important part. Yāska, for example, refers to the custom of throwing dice against a person to decide his claim in property (a practice, probably, current in his times), while commenting on *RV* I. 124.7, which describes the goddess Dawn (Uṣas), as a woman having no brother and claiming share.[21]

We have noted that the ritual-game of dice is closely associated with the immolation of a cow; also that the game was for symbolic success and a necessary ritual, where the sacrificer and his wife played if there was not enough number of sons. We may compare here the later Purāṇic tradition, accompanied by an *arthavāda* (a legend in this context). According to *skanda P.* (II.4.10.2), gambling, which is prohibited at other times, is a must at the time of the festival of *Dīpāvalī*. Thus, it says, gambling on the first day of the bright half of *Kārttika* ensures happiness and glory for the whole year; it adds that this custom was started by Śiva himself (*Ib.* 21). *Nīlamata P.* (511-512) mentions playing of dice at the festival of *Dīpāvalī* and says that one who wins will have a victorious new year. According to *Padma P.* (*Uttarakhaṇḍa* 124 26-30), dice formed part of the said festival, and was played on the dark fourteenth of the month *Aśvina*, which is the day called Narakacaturdaśī. It says, further, that on this day in ancient times Śiva and Pārvatī played the game of dice. Pārvatī propitiated Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth, and asked her to favour her. Lakṣmī, accordingly, stood by the side of Pārvatī in the form of a cow. The result was that Śiva lost the game and had to run away without any covering on his body (to suit his name *Dig-ambara*). The ritual-significance of the dice is clear in the account; and, though not clearly enjoined, the gift of a cow, substituting her immolation, could be inferred. We have mentioned above that the dice had its own importance in folk-belief, whence it entered the Vedic ritual. It is not necessary to suppose that the Purāṇic account has come from the Vedic ritual. It might have come directly from popular customs. Also, ritual-gambling is not restricted to the Vedic ritual-tradition. It obtains also among other peoples as a means of divination.[22]

References

1. *Aśv. Gṛ.S.* I. 5.6.
2. *Hir. Gṛ.S.* II. 7.1-5; *Bhār.Gṛ.S.* II.7; *Âp.Gṛ.S.* VII. 18.1-2; *Pār. Gṛ.S.* I.16.24-25; the custom of carrying a dead body through a hole of a wall, or through a window but not through the regular door may be compared, for which see Murdock J.P , *Our Primitive Contemporaries*, New York, 18th Ed. 1958, p. 253.

3. *Pār.Gṛ.S.* II.10.17.
4. *Kāt.Ś.S.* XV, 7.13.
5. *Āp.Ś.S.* XVIII. 18.16.
6. *Ibid.*, 19.6-8.
7. *Kāt.Ś.S.* XV. 7.18-19.
8. *Āp Ś.S.* XVIII. 19.1.
9. *Bhār.Ś.S.* 5.12-16. also see Dandekar R.N. and Kashikar C.G., *Śrautakośa*, Vol. I (Eng. Tr.), Poona, 1958, p. 59.
10. Macdonell A.A. and Keith A.B., *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, London. 1912, under *Akṣa*.
11. *RV* X. 34.1,8,9; *AV* IV. 38.1,3; *AV* uses the word *glaha* (—*graha*) for throwing the dice (loc. cit.); *RV* VIII. 81.1b uses the word *grāha*.
12. *Chān. Up*. IV. 1.4-6. In the legend of king Jānaśruti and the cart-man Raikva, the *Kṛta* throw is said to win the dice of the lower order.
13. Rudradatta, commenting on *Āp,Ś.S.* V. 21.1, explains the throws (*ayāḥ*) as follows : "When all the dice in a throw are divisible by four, it is termed *Kṛta*; when three, it is termed *Tretā*; when two dice remain, it is *Dvāpara*; and when only a single dice remains, it is termed *Kali.*" At *RV* I.49.9ab and X.34.2cd, the lucky throw is connected with four dice; the unlucky one is connected with one which remains. For *Kali*, see *Dhammapada*, 252; cf. also *Pāṇini* II.1.10 in the context of the *Avyayībhāva* compound. Thus, *Akṣapari* is an unlucky throw of dice; *Śalākāpari* is an unlucky throw of ivory dice; likewise, *Ekapari*, *Dvipari*, *Tripari* and *Catuṣpari*.

    Another interpretation of these terms is suggested by Susan Oleksiw, "Dicing in the Mṛcchakaṭika", *Brahmavidya* (The Adyar Lib. Bulletin), Vols. 44-45, 1980-81 (—*Dr. K.K. Kunjunni Raja Fel. Vol.*), Madras, p. 427; for various types of dice, Ib., pp. 415-435.
14. *AV* VII. 114.1.
15. *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, under *Akṣa*.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *RV* X.34.12 where the gambler expresses a wish to bow down to to the *akṣa*-s. That the hymn has ritual value is shown by Norman Brown; see his article in *Bharatiya Vidya*, 1961, being *K.M. Munshi Fel. Vol.* See also *RV* X.116.9cd where the gods Indra and Agni are compared with the dice due to their power of bestowing wealth and uprooting enemies.
18. *AV* XIV.1.35, 36.

19. *Taitt, Sam.* 3.4.1.16. Here we have *Kitava*, *Sabhāvin*, *Ādinavadarśa*, *Bahiḥ-sad*, and *Sabhā-sthāṇu* for the *Akṣarāja*, *Kṛta*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali* respectively.

20. See *Vedic Index*, under *Yuga*.

21. *Nir.* III.5 *gartaḥ sabhāsthāṇurgṛṇāteḥ | satyasaṅgaro bhavati | tam tatra yā'putrā yā'patikā sārohati tām tatrākṣairāghnanti sā riktham labhate |*

    Actually, the words *tām tatra-akṣair-āghnanti*, do not seem to appear in the text used by Durga. So, the expression is to be taken as of Yāska, or of some one who got it interpolated, if it is not of Yāska. In any case, the custom of settling the claim of a share-seeker by hitting him, or her, with the dice for divination is clear. For this, see Dange, S.S., "Yāska on Widow's Share", *Vishveshvarananda Indological Jnl.*, Vol. XVIII, Pts. i-ii (1980), being *Prof. K.V. Sarma Fel. Vol.*, Hoshiarpur, pp. 385-387.

22. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. IV, p. 779b.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CAITYA-YAJÑA

The *Caitya-yajña* is rather an obscure ritual from the *Gṛhyasūtras*—obscure in the sense that it is not found in most of the *Gṛhyasūtra* texts. Actually, it is found only in the *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* (I. 12.1-4). It consists of an offering to the *caitya*. A similar sacrifice, though not named *Caitya-yajña* as such, obtains in the *Pār. Gr. S.* (III. 11.10-11); but the ritual with its name obtains only at the *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* which describes it as follows :

> At a *Caitya--sacrifice*, the sacrificer should make an offering to the *Caitya* prior to the *sviṣṭakṛt* offering. However, if the *Caitya* is at a distance, the offering is to be sent through a messenger. The messenger is called *Palāśa-dūta* the name indicating a leaf in general, or, more particularly the leaf of the tree of that name (*Butea Frondosa*). The sacrificer is to prepare two balls of food with the verse, "where, O king of the woods, the secret names of the gods you know, there lead these offerings" (*RV* V. 5.10). He should then tuck them on a carrying-pole. Pointing to one of the balls he should address the 'messenger', "Carry this offering to the *Caitya*"; and pointing to the second one. "This is for you," indicating that the other ball is the food for the messenger on the way. If there is anything of a danger in between the place of this sacrifice and the actual habitat of the *Caitya*, the sacrificer should give to (i.e. place near) the messenger a weapon. If there be a river in the way, he should place something like a raft near the messenger, helping him cross the river.

In the context of the peculiar importance given to the *Caitya-yajña* by *Āśv. Gr. S.* and its absence in other *Gr. S.* texts, it is necessary to probe the concept behind the word *caitya*, and also the social implication thereof. Gārgya Nārāyaṇa, the commentator of *Āśv. Gr. S.* explains the word *caitya*, as "*citte bhavaḥ*" (i.e. *caitya* is that which is resolved in the mind). He explains further that if a man makes a vow regarding the offerings to be given to a certain deity in the event of some gain or the like, and fulfils the same, on his accomplishing the gain with the offering of a *sthālipāka*, a *caru* or a beast, the sacrifice is the *caitya-yajña* (and the desire itself is the *caitya*). This explanation cannot be accepted; as it is based on the later concept of *citi*, which indicates "mind", or "soul", the individual soul as against the cosmic soul.[1] The word *caitya* is also sought to be derived from the word *citā*, which means "funeral pyre", and that it orginally has connection with the funeral pyre, the tumulus raised over the ashes of the dead, or a tree marking the spot.[2] This opinion is quite acceptable and goes well with the etymological sense of the word *citi*. Here also the point to be noted is that the word *citi* has been formed from the root, √*Ci*, "to collect", or "to arrange in particular manner". Rapson says and plausibly so, that the concept of the "funeral monument" seems to have been in vogue from the earliest phases of Indian literature whether Brahmanic, Buddhist or Jain, and that the custom of erecting such monuments obtains. The Prakrit and the Pali equivalents of the word are "*chetiya*" (as written by Rapson), and it is practically synonymous to *stūpa*. In the later ages, *caitya* was used to indicate any auspicious shrine, or even a sacred tree.[3] Yet, this cannot be the whole truth. The main point, as we have noted above, is the concept of collection or arrangement in a typical fashion. This was the most original meaning behind the word *citi*. This will be proved from such words as *śyena-citi*, *kaṅka-citi*, etc.[4] which indicate the arrangement of the altar in certain magical rites. In line with this comes the *śmaśāna-citi* in the *Śulva-sūtras*.[5] The word *citi* is used even in the context of the ritual of the dead, which is only one phase of the general concept behind the word. In the rituals of the dead there obtains a rite called *sañcayana* (fr. *sam* + √*Ci*.) which also signifies the collections of bones after cremation and their arrangement in a particular fashion. The bones of a male were collected in a plain jar (or urn); and the bones of a woman were collected in an urn having the signs of a female, such as breasts. The bones were to be picked up with the thumb and the ring-finger (as is the case even this day), and were to be placed into the urn. The bones of the feet were to be placed first, and those of the head last. This urn was, then, placed in a trench devoid of any flow of water, except the rainwater, or it was also, alternatively, placed under the root of a tree.[6] After this came the rite called *Pitṛmedha*, which was also called by the term *śmaśāna*, performed generally on the New-moon day.[7] In this context we have the structure called *loṣṭa-citi*. For this *loṣṭa-citi* the spot selected was to be out of sight for the common men, and out of the village, and in a hidden place. But, it must be open to the sun-rays. To this spot the urn of bones was to be brought; the bones were to be taken away from the urn, and were to be laid on the bed of sacred grass (*darbha*) in such a way that the arrangement would look like the figure of a human-being. The figure was to be covered with an old piece of cloth. The urn was to be destroyed. Over the remains was to be erected a monument according to a set pattern. This was the *loṣṭa-citi*. There seems to be no doubt that this gave rise to the concept and practice of the *caitya* and the Buddhist *stūpa*.[8]

What has been described above may be compared with the *caitya* in the *caitya-yajña* in the *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* That *caitya*, most probably, refers to some such mound, built in a far away and a secluded place, out of reach for people normally, may be beyond a river. As the place was secluded and full of trees, it must have been believed to contain spirits or wild beasts; hence the provision of a weapon! And the raft for the 'messenger' to cross the river !! It appears that such *caityas* were, more often than not, for some important persons in the family.

The reference to a raft, or a mini-boat, is rather interesting. One of the numerous and frequently mentioned characteristic details regarding the ritual of *śmaśāna* is a piece of reed which is immured, apparently for the purpose of serving as a boat for the dead.[9] The idea is that the dead have to cross a river, while entering the other world. The *Palāśa-dūta* sent with the offerings to the *caitya* must have been believed to cross this river, on the conceptual plane; hence was the necessity to provide him with a raft or a mini-boat. We have noted earlier that a similar rite obtains in *Pār. Gṛ. S.* (III. 11.10,11); and even there the raft is mentioned. We have noted that, among the *Gṛ. S.*, it is *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* which mentions the rite in certain details, though meagre. The indication is that this rite had already begun to die off, its place being taken by the libations to be offered at the *śrāddha* performed in the house itself. And though some holy places, or river-side haunts came to be famous for the performance of *śrāddhas*, the *caitya-yajña* went behind curtain to leave the ritual-drama to the *Śrāddhas*.

References

1. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 335b; also see *Bhāg. P.* III 26, 61.
2. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 335a.
3. *Ibid.*
4. For the *citis* of various shapes see *Baudh. Ś.S.* III-X; *Āp.Ś.S.* IV-VI.
5. *Baudh, Ś.S.* VIII. 1-3; *Āp.Ś.S.* IV 14, 10-15.
6. *Aśv.Gṛ.S.* IV 5, 1-8, and the com. of Gārgya Narāyaṇa also Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, pp. 366-7.
7. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics* VI, p. 478, 479a under "Death and Disposal of the Dead" (Hindu), article by Hillebrandt A. also *Śrauta Kośa* I-ii, VSM, Poona, pp. 1096-1109.
8. *Cf. Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. IV. 479a The *stūpa* of the Buddhist tradition first comes in the Vinaya texts in the context of the *Cchabbaggiyas*; see Meena Talim, "Origin of the Cchabbaggiyas", *Proceedings of Prakrit Seminar*, Bombay University, 1971, p. 214. The Vinaya texts may be dated to the third century B.C. But actually, in the written form they belong to 1st Century B.C.; see Winternitz, M., Vol. II, *A History of Indian Literature*, Calcutta, 1933 pp. 5-8.
9. *Encl. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. IV, p. 479a, also p. 475b; also Dange S.S., "A lost (!) Funeral Custom in the Ṛgveda (RV X. 135), *Proceedings*, 28th Session, All India Or, Conf., Dharwar, 1976. Even in the ritual of the *Śrāddha* a mini-boat is made of sugarcane and is given to the brahmin in the funeral ceremony; See *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, II 4, 36 & 37.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ANIMAL-HIDES

The *Gr. sūtras* mention various hides in connection with various rituals; and there seems to be a regular belief regarding the employment of each of the hides, indicating symbolism. It should be remembered that the *Gṛ. sūtras* take up the earlier tradition of beliefs regarding the hides in many cases; as such, these earlier beliefs reflected in the *Śrauta Sūtras* have also to be taken into account while referring to the *Gr. sūras*.

Thus, in the context of marriage, *Āśv. Gr. S.* (I.8.5.9) says that, after the marriage, when the couple starts for the bride-groom's residence, the nuptial fire is constantly carried before the couple on the way. After reaching the residence, this fire is established in the proper place; a bull's hide is to be spread to the west of the fire in such a way that the part of the neck will face the east and the hairy portion will be up. The bride is made to sit on this hide. Offering four oblations of clarified butter into the fire, accompanied by four verses from *RV* (X. 85.43-46) the bride-groom eats curds, and the remaining curds are given to the bride; or, the hearts of both are smeared with the clarified butter that remains after the oblations into the fire. *Pār. Gr.S.* (II.6.8,10) also notes the same details. It says that the hide of the bull should be of red colour, i.e. the bull should be of red colour. This is only one instance. There are many.

The practice of using animal-hides at rituals goes back to the Ṛgvedic period, and is prominent in the ritual of the pressing of Soma. Thus, the stones for pressing the shoots of Soma are kept on the hide of a cow.[1] The cow-hide is associated with a rite in the *Mahāvrata*, which was a festival occasion and formed part of the Soma-sacrifice at the Summer or the Winter solstice, corresponding to *Bhādrapada-Aśvina* or *Māgha*. In this rite a *Kṣatriya* was required to shoot three arrows consecutively in such a way that they got stuck into a cow-hide that was kept straight, and hanging at a certain distance.[2] The very nature of the Mahāvrata is symbolic, and the cow-hide stood for the earth to be fructified by the "shaft". In the same rite, a high-born man and a *Śūdra* fought for a round piece of hide, which symbolized the sun. The bull-hide is employed in the Sautrāmaṇī iṣṭi. The Caraka Sautrāmaṇī (the other variety being the Kaukilī) is described as using various things, including the hide of a red bull.[3] A jar of wine (called *surā-soma*), prepared from barley and rice, was placed on the hide of the bull to the east of the fire-chamber. According to Baudhāyana the hide was to be that of a red bull, while according to Śāliki it may not be necessarily so. The other type of Sautrāmaṇī also mentions the hide of the bull. The things needed for this rite were, then, kept on this hide.[4] The mortar, in which the grains (to prepare the *Brahmaudana*) were pounded, was also placed on the bull-hide.[5] According to Kātyāyana this hide was to be of the red bull;[6] and the same is the case with the hide used in cremation rites. Thus, in a rite which was to be performed at a place in between the cremation-ground and the village, a fire was kindled (or caused to be blazed if brought along, from somewhere). To the back of this fire the hide of a red bull was to be spread, the neck-part to the east and hair up. All the relatives of the dead stepped upon this hide, with the *mantra*, "Ascend praising the old age" (*ārohata āyur jarasam gṛṇānāḥ*). Then descending, they went to the west.

Another hide that is used in rituals is that of the black antelope. In the cremation-rites for a person who had kept the sacred fires for his life, his dead body was kept on the hide of a black antelope. The neck-part in this case was kept to the south, and the hairy part was upwards.[1] Also on the pyre the hide of the black antelope was placed on which his body was then placed, the pyre being made of *Udumbara* wood.[8]

In the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, the shoots of Soma were placed on the hides of a black antelope; and the *mantra* recited at this time was, "Sit on the seat of Aditi" (*adityāḥ sade āsīda*).[9] Thus, the hide symbolized the seat of Aditi, indicating freedom. In the same sacrifice, after the ritual bath the sacrificer was required to touch a hide of the black antelope. He had to touch the white spots with the thumb and the black with the little finger. The *mantras* recited at this time was. "You are the art of *Ṛk* and the *Sāman*; I touch you; those you, protect me for the all round excellence of this sacrifice." (*rk-sāmayoḥ śilpe stha, vām ārabhe, te mā pātam, ā asya yajñasya udrce iti*). In the Kaukilī Sautrāmaṇī rite (*Vār. Śr. S.* III. 2.8) the *Adhvaryu* priest spread the hide of the black antelope on a stool, or a small table, with the *mantra* "You are the womb of armed prowess" (*kṣatrasya yonir asi*); and this stool was kept to the south of the *Āhavanīya* fire. *Kātyāyana Śr. S.* (IV. 13, 14; I.9. 1-5) says that the sacrificer should be made to sit on this stool and given bath. The mortar and the pestle for pounding the grains used at the sacrifice (*Piṇḍapitṛyajña* and at other places) were placed on the hide of the black antelope; and the neck-part in this case was to be to the south-western direction.[10]

The *Gṛhyasūtras* lay down the use of the hide of the black antelope for the initiate. It formed the upper covering of the initiate in the case of a *Brāhmaṇa* initiate, while for the *Kṣatriya* it was the hide of the Ruru type of the antelope. The hide of a goat, or that of a bull (cow) was meant for the *Vaiśya* initiate.[11] It appears that the *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Kṣatriya* initiates were associated with the hides of antelopes due to the animal being the accepted symbol of the sacrifice, and of Prajāpati,[12] while the *Vaiśya* being connected mainly with agriculture his animal was the goat, or the bull (cow). The boar-hide finds a place in the Rājasūya sacrifice. After the symbolic winning of the cows, the sacrificer (the would-be king) descends from the chariot and wears the shoes made of the boar-hide. He, then, bows down to the earth and says, "Mother Earth ! Do not hurt me. I also shall not injure you" (*Vāj. Sam.* X. 23; *Tait. Sam.* I. 8.15.5). The reference to the boar-hide in connection with the earth is quite symbolic. In *Śat. Br.* (XIV. 1.2.11) we see the boar Emuṣa lifting up the earth. He is regarded as Prajāpati and the master of the earth. *Tait. Sam.* has already a reference to this.[13] From this account the later myth of the Varāha-incarnation of Viṣṇu is developed. As the boar was regarded as the master of the earth, the use of the shoes of the boar-hide is a sympathetic charm for the king's mastery over the earth. Though he addresses the earth as "Mother", the bore-hide of the shoes remains a symbol for the boar. In the Rājasūya sacrifice, the sacrificer (would-be king) was required to throw aside with his foot a piece of lead kept on the tiger-hide; and he placed his foot on a piece of gold placed on another tiger-hide. After the rite of coronation and the dice-play, he was to take three steps on the tiger-hide, the steps being called *Viṣṇu-krama*. The tiger-hide, obviously, symbolized strength in these rites.[14] According to Macdonell and Keith, the standing on the hide of the tiger was indicative of the gain of the strength of the tiger.[15] However, the idea seems to be to imbibe the strength of the tiger.

Apart from these hides, the hide of an ass also figured in some of the rites. *Āp. Dh. S.* (I. 10.28.19) says that a married man who deceives his wife and goes to some other woman should cover himself with the hide of an ass, with the hairy part outside. In this condition he should daily wander begging alms at seven houses only, declaring his vile act. The ass-hide figures prominently in the expiation-rite prescribed for an *avakirṇī-brahmacārin*. The term denotes a *brahmacārin* who broke the vow of celibacy.[16] *Taitt. Ār.* lays down the expiation rite meant for the *avakīrṇī*, said to be first promulgated by Sudeva Kāśyapa.[17] *Pār. Gṛ. S.* (III. 12. 1-8) gives elaborate details in this connection. According to this *Gṛ. S.*, the *avakirṇī* was required to procure an ass on the new-moon day. On the same day, he was to offer a sacrifice, according to the *pākayājña* method, to the goddess Nirṛti at a place where four roads meet. The portions of offerings (cooked rice) were to be thrown into the water; and the *puroḍāśa*, in the form of the flesh of the ass, was to be placed on the bare ground, and not on the usual potsherds (*kapāla*). The *avakīrṇī* had to cover himself with the hide of that ass, and had to beg alms for one year, telling about his misdeed to the people whom he begged. The same *Gṛ. S.* (i.e. *Pār.*) gives another expiation-rite in this connection.[18] *Āp. Dh. S.* (I. 9.26. 8-9) also lays down that the *avakīrṇī-brahmacārin* should offer an ass to Nirṛti, in the manner of the *pākayajañas*; but says that the remaining portion of the offering is to be given to a *Śūdra* to be eaten. Jaimini states that these offerings are to be thrown into the ordinary fire (and not in the water).[19] Apart from the *Gṛ. Śūtras*, the *Smṛti* texts also mention the expiation for the *Avakirṇī*.[20] The *Mitākṣarā*, on *Yāj. Sm.*, rightly points out that the *brahmacārin* becoming an *avakīrṇī* acquires the characteristic of a beast (*paśu-dharma*).[21] It should be noted that the reference to the ass comes only in the context of a sexual lapse. There is reason behind it. The ass has been a symbol of the lusty tendency in the tradition. He is termed *dviretas*, as he places his semen in the female ass and also in a mare.[22] It is well known that the mule is the product of the union between the mare and the ass. We may note a detail from the *Matsya P.* in this context. Actually, Kāma, the god of love, is associated with the ass. The Purāṇa mentioned above prescribes that while drawing the picture of Kāma, a lusty ass is to be shown by his side.[23] The sacrifice of, and the wearing of the hide of, an ass is, thus, an apt expiation for the culprit.

Raferences

1. *RV*, X.94.9b. Sāyaṇa takes *gavi* to mean *adhiṣavaṇa-Carmaṇi*. Yāska gives the same meaning. *Nir.* II. 2.
2. *Śāṅkh. Śr. S.* XVII. 15 Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, p. 170.
3. *Baudh. Śr, S.* XVII. 31-38; XXIII. 16; XXVI. 22; XIV. 23, 30.
4. *Śrautakośa*, Vol. I-ii, p. 931.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 1042, n.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 1040.
9. *Baudh. Sr. S.* VI. 15.
10. *Śrautakośa*, Vol. I-ii, pp. 480, 484. In the Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifice the mortar was first kept on the black-antelope hide and then the grains were put into it; see *Baudh. Sr. S.* I. 6-8; III. 15, etc.

11. *Āśv.Gṛ.S.* I.19.8; *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.S.* II.1.2,4,5; *Pār.Gṛ.S.* II.5.17-19; *Baudh. Śr.S.* II. 5.16; *Hir.Gṛ.S.* I.4.7; *Gobh. Gṛ.S.* II. 10.8.
12. See Dange, S.A. *Vedic Myths through Social Perspective*, Hoshiarpur, 1982, Ch. on "Vedic Dīkṣā—Ritual and Myth".
13. *Taitt. Sam.* I.10.8. Here we find a black boar, having thousand arms lifting up the earth.
14. Cf. *AV* IV. 7; 8.
15. *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, London, 1912, under *Vyāghṛa*.
16. On *Yāj. Sm.* III. 280a, the *Mitākṣarā* explains as follows : *caramadhātoḥ visargaḥ avakīrṇam, tad asya asti saḥ avakīrṇī*/Cf. Kṣīrasvāmin, on the word *avakīrṇī* from the *Amarakośa*. Also. *Vaikh. Smārta S.* VI. 8.
17. *Taitt. Ār.* II. 18.
18. *Pār.Gṛ.S.* III.12.9-11; the *avakīrṇī* had to offer four oblations of clarified butter in the fire. Then he had to invoke the various deities. This expiation was also to be performed for one year.
19. Śabara on this says———*taşmādidamupi Karma laukikeşviti.*
20. *Gaut. Dh. S.* XXIII. 17-19; *Manu Sm.* XI.118-123; *Baudh.Dh.S.* II.1.35-43; *Yajñ. Sm.* III. 280; see also *Agni P.* 169.15-18; *Viṣṇu Dh. S.* XXVIII. 49-50; *Vas.Dh.S.* XXIII. 1-3; *Vas.Dh.S.* allows oblations of boiled rice with the suitable *mantras*, in the absence of an ass. The *mantras* are the same as mentioned in Note 18 above. See also Kane, *Hist. of Dh.*, Vol. II-i, Poona, 1974, p. 374; also Vol. IV, Poona, 1973, pp. 112-113.
21. *Mitākṣarā* on Yāj. Sm. III. 280b—*gardabhasya paśutve siddhe'pi punaḥ paśugrahaṇam atha paśukalpaḥ* (1.11.1) *ityāśvalāyanādigṛhyoktapaśudharmaprāptyartham*/ See Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. II-ii, p. 374.
22. *Taitt. Saṃ.* V. 1.5.5; VII. 1.1.2; *Śat. Br.* VI. 3.1.23; for the belief that, if a pregnant woman sees the coitus of asses her would-be child will become strong, sce *Bhāratīya Sanskriti Kośa*, Vol. II, under "*Gardabha*". At *Pañcaviṃśa Br.* VI. 1.4, the mare is *dviretas*.
23. *Matsya P.*, 260 55.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SARPA-BALI

The rite of *Sarpabali* is also called *Śravaṇā* or *Śravaṇā-karma* (*Baudh. Gr. S.* III. 10. 1). The rite is prescribed in the rainy season because in this season there is fear from the serpents. The rite is fixed for the full-moon-day of the month *Śravaṇā*. In this connection, *Sāṅkh Gr. S.* (IV. 15. 1) says that it is to be performed on the Full-moon-day which is marked by the constellation *Śraviṣṭhā*, while, according to *Baudh. Gṛ .S.* (III. 10. 2) it is to be performed in the month marked by the *Āśreṣā* (*Āśleṣā*) constellation. *Pār. Gṛ. S.* (II. 14) gives some details about this rite. According to this *Gṛ. S.* the performer should cook the *sthālīpāka* (boiled grains in a particular vessel), and should get malt parched. He should roast the *puroḍāśa* (cake) on a *kapāla* (plain pan made of earth ; it is called "pot-sherd" by some scholars, which is not very correct). More than half of the malt should be ground finely, and he should offer two oblations of clarified butter into the fire. Then two more oblations of clarified butter should be offered with the *mantra* "*apa śveta padā jahi* ..". He should, thereafter, offer oblations of cooked sacrificial food to Viṣṇu, called here *Śravaṇā*, the full moon in the month of *Śrāvaṇa* and the rainy season. He should offer malt with a *mantra* (*Vāj. Sam.* 20. 29) that refers to malt, along with the sweet cake (*dhānāvantam karambhiṇam apūpavantam* etc.). Actually, the mantra is meant to be for Indra (cf. *Ib. cindra prātar juṣasva naḥ* ; but, it is prescribed here due to the mention of the word *karambha* (which is thick malt). Then, to the serpents he should offer thin malt mixed with clarified butter; the same is also to be offered to Agni, Vāyu and the Sun-god (Sūrya). On one *kapāla* he should offer the whole of the *puroḍāśa* with the *mantra* "*Om Dhruva Bhauma svāhā*".[1] He should, then, take a portion of the roasted malt, and go out of the locality. This is to be done after he has partaken of the remaining portion of the cooked offering. Out of the locality, he should plaster an elevated place with the cow-dung. Here some one holds a fire-brand before the sacrificer ; and the latter says, "None should go in between me and the fire". Then starts the adoration and worship of the serpents. With the. recitation of the proper *mantras*, he should pour some water for the bath of the serpents ; then he should offer portions of malt upon the elevated place plastered with the cow-dung, with the help of the ladle. He should, then, enact the combing of the hairs of the serpents with a comb ; then place collyrium, sandal and wreaths for the serpents on the same place and worship the serpents (as if they have arrived) with suitable *mantras*.[2] The remainder of the malt should be placed on the same place and offered water. Coming home, he should circumambulate his dwelling thrice with the idea that there should be no fear from the serpents. While doing so, he should go on pouring a continuous stream of water with suitable *mantras*. The ladle and the winnowing basket in which he had carried the malt outside should be given away. The same should be done in respect of any place, which is desired to be free from serpents. He should sprinkle himself at the entrance of the dwelling with the mantras (*Vāj. Sam*. XI. 50-52). The offering of malt should be placed on the same elevated place till the *Agrahāyaṇī*-day, daily after the evening offerings to the fire are dropped into the fire. None should be allowed to pass in between the offering and the performer. After the offering he should sip water and wash the ladle. This ends the daily rite. This is practically the ritual prescribed by almost all *Gṛ. Sūtras*.[3] Some points may be noted. *Sāṅkh Gṛ. S.* (IV. 15. 1-22) mentions the various things which are common for the reception of a guest, such as comb, sandal, flowers, as noted above, and even a mirror. *Hir*. and *Ap. Gṛ. S. s* (II. 16.1-13, and VII. 1. 5-12 respectively) mention the flowers of the *kimśuka* (*palāśa*), which, probably, is suggested from the shape rather than the colour.

The worship of the serpents and the offerings to the serpents gained so much importance that the rite is enjoined to be performed even by the wife of a householder, if the latter has to go out of the house on some work during the period. *Mān. Gṛ. S.* (II. 16. 6) states that the *Śūdra* wife of a brahmin may also offer the *bali* after washing her hands clean and without the *mantras.* According to *Aśv. Gṛ. S.* (II.1 10-12), in a rite called *Paridāna-(vidhi)*, the performer circumambulates the offerings that are placed for the serpents and takes his seat to the west of the offerings. He, then, utters the *mantra* which has the bearing, "You are *sarpa* (serpent, and also literally, "the one that moves") ; may you move away ; you are the lord of the serpents; you protect men with the offerings of the food-oblations ; with the serpents you protect with *apūpas* (sweet cakes) ; with sacrifices the gods ; may not serpents that are under you bite me that am under you". Then he utters the name of every member of his family putting it in the accusative (object) and says "I give unto you" (*pari-dadāmi*). At the end, he should utter his own name, and addressing the lord of the serpents as Dhruva, he should say, "I give myself unto you." This rite is called, thus rightly, *Paridāna.* Till the rite ends none should pass in between the performer and the offerings. The *Paridāna-vidhi* does not appear to be prescribed by other *Gṛhya-sūtras. Aśv, Gṛ. S.* states at another place (II. 1. 14) that daily offerings to the serpents are to be placed from the full-moon-day of *Śrāvaṇa* to the bright fourteenth of *Mārgaśīrṣa*, or the full-moon-day of that month. In this case, only the *mantra "sarpadevajanebhyah svāhā"* (Offerings to the serpents, gods and men) is to be recited ; no *Paridāna* is prescribed here.

The ritual for the propitiation of the serpents, recorded by the *Gṛhyasūtras*, fixes the period between the months *Śrāvaṇa* and *Mārgaśīrṣa* ; and it can be taken as the norm for the ritual-propitiation that obtains in these days, the special day being the Fifth of *Śrāvaṇā*, the Nāga-pañcamī.[4] The modern method of going to the ant-hill resort of the serpents, and worshipping them there, is reflected in *Baudh. Gṛ. S.* (III. 10. 3 *apām samīpe valmīkāgreṇa vā pacanam*), which indicates the cooking of the offering near a water-resort, or the ant-hill. Serpents are traditionally associated with the water-places.[5] The *Smṛtis* mention the worship of the serpents in case there is absence of progeny.[6] We have noted that the Fifth of *Śrāvaṇa* is auspicious to the serpents. The *Gṛhyasūtras*, however, do not stick to this particular date, referring it to be on the Fifteenth bright of *Śrāvaṇa* as noted above. The sanctity of the Fifth, though not the bright of the month, is marked in South India and in Bengal-where the serpent, goddess Manasā is worshipped on the dark Fifth of *Śrāvaṇa*.[7]

It may not be out of place to see the custom of Serpent-worship as mentioned by the Purāṇas. Thus, *Skanda P.* mentions rainy season and the Nāga-Pāñcamī (IV. 64.10 *kartavyā nāgapañcamyām yatra varṣāsu tatra hi*) the place of worship being Jyeṣṭheśvara at Kāśī. *Bhaviṣya P.* (*Brahmakhaṇḍa* 32 . 44 ff) mentions the Nāga-pañcamī in the dark half of the month *Bhadrapada* (*v* 44 *māsi bhādrapade yā tu kṛṣṇapakṣe mahīpate*). The material in the worship to the serpents referred to by the *Gṛhya* texts obtains, with little difference, in the Purāṇic tradition also ; they include the flowers of *karavīra* (red in colour), sandal-wood-paste and saffron. However, here we have reference to the preparation of the serpents from gold, wood, or even from clay, the number being generally five. *Bhaviṣya P.* (*Brahmakhaṇḍa*) mentions twelve dark Fifths to be so observed, each being in the name of a separate Nāga : *Ananta, Vāsuki, Śaṅkha, Padma, Kambala, Karkoṭaka, Aśvatara, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Śaṅkhapāla Kāliya, Tarṣaka* and *Piṅgala* (*Ib.*, 52). Even in the month of *Āśvina*, serpents are said to be worshipped (*Ib.*, 38. 1. 2). This would give an idea of the continuation of the *Gṛhya* tradition. That the worship of the serpents goes back to the Vedic period is attestable from the fact that the *mantras* for the worship are taken from the Vedic texts (*Vāj. Sam.* XIII. 6-8 ; about the same are at *Taitt. Sam.* IV. 2. 8. 3ff. *Kaīṭh Sam.* 16. 15ff), and they clearly refer to the adoration of the serpents.[8] It is generally believed that at the time of *RV* actual worship of serpents does not obtain.[9] The point, however, deserves thought. We have noted above the rite called '*paridāna*', where the performer symbolically gives his family members, and lastly himself, to the serpent. In this back-ground, it is necessary to view one passage from *RV* (VII. 104. 9). Here, Vasiṣṭha desires Soma to deliver unto the Serpent the person who censures him. There can be no doubt that the word *ahi* in this context indicates a real hooded serpent[10] The place is a clear indication of the custom of offering a sinful person to the serpent. Though this is a solitary reference, it is very important. This actual practice, probably, gave way to the symbolic offering ; in the latter phase, it was at a ritual to redeem oneself from the fear of serpent-bite. This later phase is reflected in the rite of *pari-dāna*, noted above. The difference to be marked is that in the Ṛgvedic reference, there is nothing of self-offering, as is the case at the *Gṛhya* rite. But, in the absence of any clear reference to actual serpent-worship in *RV*, and the clear indication of it along with the *mantras* in the other *Saṁhitās* noted above, it cannot be said positively that the Ṛgvedic people did not practise serpent-worship. The sober and benevolent aspect of the serpent was already accepted even at that remote period ; and it is attested by the mention of the deity Ahir Budhnya. It is, hence, more probable that *RV* does not find occasion to refer to the practice of serpent-worship as such due to the peculiar nature of the *Saṁhitā*, while the later texts, having a more prominent ritual-note refer to it.

At this juncture, one more point has to be noted. Even in the *Gṛhya* tradition, the offering to the serpents is enjoined to be offered out of the locality, as noted above. This brings to our mind the case of another interesting ritual, that of *Śūla-gava.*[11] The chief part in this rite is the immolation, and offering of a bull to Rudra. But, the pertinent part is of its being performed out of the locality, and, again, at a late hour of the night (so that it may be concealed from general sight of the public). The instruction is very clear (*Mān. Gṛ. S.* II. 5. 6 *grāmasya sakāśe nisi; Aśv. Gṛ. S.* IV. 9. 13. *ūrdhvam ardharātrāt*). After the bull is sacrificed and offered, no part of its body was to be brought into the locality, nor was any of the instruments to be so brought. Portions of the flesh from the stomach were to be offered to twelve Rudras, named Hara, Mṛḍa, Śarva etc. ; the head, legs, tail and the skin were to be put into the fire. The blood was to be poured to the north, on the blades of the sacred grass, for the serpents. Another rite for the welfare of the sacrificer, and for the gain of progeny, in honour of Rudra is *Trymbaka-homa*. This is also enjoined to be performed out of the locality.[12] The details that are similar about the sacrifice to Rudra and the serpents would indicate that they are on the same level. As for Rudra, there is ample evidence to his being well-grounded in the Vedic pantheon. The respect to the serpents in the Vedic *Saṁhitās* mentioned above would show that they were perfectly Vedic, in spite of the near-absence of respectable reference to them in *RV*. On the other side, there is regular reference to the Sarpas in the Vedic records, as a people (*Kāṭḥ Sam.* V. 6 ; *Ait. Br.* 13. 7). These people appear to be so called due to the serpent being their special deity.[13] It is not improbable that these people formed an integral part of the Vedic society ; and the worship of the serpents is a gift from their fold. The offerings to the serpents out of the locality indicate only that they are found more out of the locality ; also that they were regarded, like Rudra, as a ferocious deity, and not that they were from an outside fold.

References

1. Dhruva and Bhauma are names for the serpents. Kadrū, the mother of the serpents, is said to be Bhūmi (*Suparṇādhyāya*, 102.1 *bhūmistu nāgy' abhavat kadru-nāmā*); for Dhruva, see the rite of *paridāna* below.
2. *Vāj. Sam.* 13.6-8.
3. *Śāṅkh.Gṛ.S.* IV. 15. 1-22; *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* II. 1.2-15; *Gobh. Gṛ S.* III. 7.3-23; *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* 21; *Hir. Gṛ.S.* II. 16.1-13; *Āp. Gṛ S.* VII. 1.5-12; *Kāṭh. Gṛ.S.* 55.2-4. The details of worship obtain even today in remote parts of India. Thus, according to a folk-tale from the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, a woman invoked to the Serpent-deity that she would apply collyrium to his eyes if she got a son through his favour. She got one; but, whenever the serpent appeared she was afraid. The serpent, then, assumed a small form; and she applied collyrium to his eyes. At Pachamaḍhī, in the Central Province, India, obtains a custom of offering a comb to the serpent. The place has a famous shrine of the serpent; and it attracts a vast multitude of devotees every year in the rainy season on the Nāgapañcamī day.
4. According to Kane, P.V. due to the *viṣuva* getting receded and the change in the advent of the rainy season, the day for the worship of the serpents might have changed from the Full-

moon-day to the Fifth; see, *History of Dh.*, Vol. V-i, Poona, 1951, p. 127.

5. On this see Vogel, J. Ph., *The Indian Serpent Lore*, London, 1926; also Oldham, C.F., *The Sun and the Serpent*, London, 1905.
6. Kane, *op. cil.*, Vol. II-ii, pp. 823-24.
7. See note 5 above; further, Kane, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.
8. See note 2 above; also Hastings, J., *Ency. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. XI, p. 414b ff, where various opinions are given.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Cf. *RV* VI. 75.14a *ahiriva bhogaiḥ paryeti bāhum*/Also IX. 86.44a. Here, the word *bhogaiḥ* indicates the hoods; and the next reference marks the leaving of the slough on the part of the serpent.
11. For full description, see Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. V-ii, pp. 831 f.
12. *Ibid.*
13. For the Sarpas, cf. XIII, 4.3.9, where their special lore is mentioned as *Sarpavidyā*.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

GĀTHĀS—THEIR STATUS IN THE DOMESTIC RITUALS

The word' '*gāthā*' in the sense of song or a *mantra* is many times referred to in *RV* and other works.[1] *Ait. Ār.* (2.3.6) takes *gāthā* with *ṛc* and *kumbyā* to be a different form of the *mantra. Śat. Br.* mentions the *gāthās* as the subject of study, together with *RV, SV, AV Anuśāsanas, Vidyās, Vidā, Vakovākya, Itihāsa-Purāṇa* and *Nārāśamsīs.* The word *gāthā*, many times, is taken with the word *nārāśamsī*, which fact invites some attention. The word *nārāśamsī* finds first occurrence in *RV* (X. 85.6); and later works distinguish the *nārāśamsī* from the *gāthā.*[2] Sāyaṇa, at one place, identifies the *gāthās* and the *nārāśamsīs;*[3] but, then, he refers also to another view according to which the *gāthās* are verses like that about "the great snake driven from the lake" (*Śat. Br.* XI. 5.5.8, and Sāyaṇa), while the *nārāśamsīs* would be such as that about Janamejaya and his horses (*Śat. Br.*, loc. cit., 12).[4] The *nārāśamsīs* were the songs sharing the nature of the *Dānastutis*, or the panegyrics of the gifts, made by the kings, at the sacrifices. Macdonell and Keith have rightly come to the conclusion that *gāthā* is a wider term, which includes the term nārāśamsī.[5] *Ait. Br.* (VII. 18) says that the story of Śunaḥśepa contains a hundred *gāthās.* As against this, it is to be noted that the extant legend of Śunaḥśepa in the said text does not contain that amount of *gāthās.* Prior to examining the problem of the origin of the *gāthās*, it is worthwhile to have a look at the use of *gāthās* in various domestic rituals. *Bhār. Gr. S.* (II.21) says that a *gāthā* should be narrated when the fresh graduate wears a jewel at the

Samāvartana ceremony. *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* (IV.6.6) points out that the member of a family should keep awake, during the period of mourning, till late at night and listen to *gāthās* (or *kaṭhās*), *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*. According to *Pār. Gṛ. S.* (I.7.2), in the marriage-ritual after the rite of ascending the stone (*aśmārohaṇa*) is over, the bride-groom sings a *gāthā*, containing two verses in praise of the goddess Sarasvatī.[6] *Kaṭh. Gṛ. S.* (25.23) says that, after the rite of *Paṇigrahaṇa* (taking of the hand of the bride by the bride-groom) the priest makes either the bride or the bride-groom, or both recite the *gāthās*.[7] Singing of a *gāthā* figures in the rite of *Sīmantonnayana* (the rite of parting the hair of the woman in pregnancy).[8] *Āśv. Gṛ. S.* (I. 14. 6-7) says that, at the end of the rite, the husband gives orders to the two lute-players to sing the glory of king Soma, so that he may protect the people settled on the bank of the river on which the rite is being performed, and they are dwellng. In this connection, *Bhār. Gṛ. S.* (I.21) mentions the name of the river Yamunā, and says that the name of the river near which the house-holder (i.e. the husband, who is performing the rite) dwells, may be inserted, in the place of Yamunā. *Hir Gṛ. S.* (II. 1.3) mentions the name of the river Gaṅgā. Barring these small variations, singing of the *gāthās* by the lute-players is an important feature of this rite in several *Gṛhyasūtras*.[9]

We have seen that *gāthās* are mentioned as a distinct and separate topic of study. This is because they have a distinct character of their own. *Ait. Br.* (VII. 18) shows difference between a *ṛc* and a *gāthā*, calling them divine and human respectively.[10] According to St. Petersberg Dictionary, the *gāthās* are non-Vedic; and this seems to be correct, taking into account the subject matter of the *gāthās*, even granting their use in religious context. Thus, they have to be differentiated from the *ṛc* and the *yajus*, and also the *sāman*. However, the *gāthās* may not be actually non-Vedic in character, though it has to be accepted that their tradition was distinct from the Vedic priestly tradition. A word about the so-called *yajña-gāthās* which are often mentioned in this connection. They come to be referred to in the sacrificial context. There appears to be no doubt about the fact that they were framed on the basis of the popular *gāthās*, that formed part of the floating mass of literature. This floating mass of literature included the *nārāś-aṃsīs*, *Itihāsa* and the *Purāṇa*, in addition to *gāthās*. The preservation of this popular folk-tradition can be attributed to the *Sūtas*, who were also singers. As Dandekar has pointed out, there were two different streams in ancient Indian literature—the one of the mantras of the priests, and the other of songs of the *Sūtas*—.[11] Winternitz says that the credit of the composition of the great epics goes to the tradition of the *Sūtas*.[12] The same can be said about the *gāthās*.

Coming to the point of the status of the *gāthās* and the propriety of their being sung in rituals, it can be said that they were sung in order to give firm support—a complementary stability—to the ritual; this was a psychological aspect, in addition to their aspect of complementation. In the *Brāhmaṇa*-texts, they appear in the form of narrations many times to form the glorificatory part of a certain ritual.[13] But, in the domestic ritual the *gāthās* had a distinct role to perform. As the domestic ritual could be performed by the house-holder, with or without the help of the priest, the singing of the *gāthās* was tantamount to the reciting of the *mantras*, as far as the aspect of giving firm basis to the ritual goes.[14] But, as we have seen, the *gāthās* came primarily from the folk-tradition, prescribed by the *Sūtas* or folk-singers. They could be easily incorporated in the *Gṛhyasūtras*, the origin of which is traceable to an oral tradition prevalent among the people of ancient India[15] *Pār. Gṛ.S.*, while describing the marriage-ritual, says that in matters relating to marriage and funeral-rites the custom as prevalent in the villages concerned is the supreme authority.[16] *Āśv. Gṛ*. S. also points out that there are many customs in the village and the country (where the house-holder lives); they are to be included in rituals mentioned above.[17] In the context of the *Sīmantonnayana* rite, the same Sūtra recommends that the advice of old brahmin women, with husbands and children living, should be taken as authoritative.[18]

All these details in the *Gṛhyasūtras* amply prove that the domestic rituals date from very ancient times, and had thrived on folk-tradition, which was, in many cases, unrecorded. It is no wonder that the *gāthās*, which were the outcome of the folk-tradition found way very easily in the domestic ritual.

As mentioned above, in addition to the ordinary *gāthās*, the *Brāhmaṇa*-texts mention the *Yajñagāthās*. They are so termed because they extol the *Śrauta* ritual. Sayaṇa explains the term as follows: "*Yajñagāthā* is one which is sung by the sacrificial priestly class extolling a particular sacrifice or a part thereof."[19] The context here is whether a person, who kept the fires, should maintain them if he is without the wife (as, possibly, she is dead); and the reply is that he should. The actual *Yajñagāthā* here says: "A sacrificer, who is without his wife and even if he has not tasted Soma, should sacrifice with the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice, so that he can be free from the debt of his ancestors".[20] The point to be noted is that this *gāthā* is sung (or, rather, quoted) as an authority to clear the doubt in the above case. It is not presented so much to extol the Sautrāmaṇī, as it is to indicate the duty (or, right) of the widowed person to keep fires as usual. We may take two more examples, out of many. At one place the *Yajñagāthā* extols the morning offering *at* the sun-rise, but *not before* the sunrise.[21] At another place, it is said that the two offerings (the one at the beginning and the other at the end) of the *Agniṣṭoma* are, or should be, the same. In this connection is quoted a *Yajñagāthā* giving the analogy of the gait of a serpent of the species of *Śākala*.[22] We may also refer to yet another instance. This is of the *Pāriplava ākhyāna* of the Horse-sacrifice. When the sacrificial stallion and its entourage has departed from the sacrificial enclosure for the one-year round, the *Pāriplava* cycle of legends starts in the sacrificial place; and it is made up of mini-cycles, each of ten days. When the *Hotṛ* priest has finished for the day, a minstrel sings the deeds of the past kings, thus bringing the present sacrificer in line with the royal sacrificers of the past.[23] These songs sung at this time may verge on the *Nārāśamsīs*. But, we have already seen, that the latter come under the *gāthās*, which signify a wider term. We have already referred to the *gāthās* from the Śunaḥśepa-legend.

Having a look at the various *gāthās*, we can say that they were used for the following different purposes :

1. Sacrificial : These were the *Yajñagāthās* to extol a particular sacrifice, or part thereof.

2. Historical ; Thus, for example, in *Śat. Br.* we have

gāthās referring to various historical personalities, as well as places associated with important sacrifices. The king of the Matsyas is said to have performed a sacrifice, the place being Dvaitavana (*Śat. Br.* XIII. 5.4.9). Then, we have reference to Dauḥṣanti Bharata, Saudyumni etc. (*Ib.*, 11-14), to Sātrājita Śatānīka (*Ib.*, 21) etc. etc.

On the side of the *Gṛhyasūtras*, we may refer to the instruction of singing a *gāthā*, at the time of the *Sīmantonnayana*, with the name of a particular river where the householder dwells. This clearly points out the geographical boundary of the application of the particular *Gṛhya-sūtra*, *Āp. Gṛ. S.* says that, in the rite of the *Sīmantonnayana*, the husband should ask the lute-players to sing two *gāthās*; the first is to be played among the people of the Śālvas, and the second about the river on which the performer dwelt.[24]

3. Didactic : Under this may be listed such examples as the one from *Ait. Br.* where the importance of the son is explained in ten *gāthās*.[25] Some of these *gāthās* have been accepted as good sayings.[26]

4. Complementary : These are *gāthās* used purely as a completing appendage to the extended ritual. In this case the *gāthās* appear to be versified short aspect of *Itihāsa* and *Akhyānas*. Here, we may again refer to the *Pāriplava Ākhyana* in *Śat. Br.* referred to above.

It is a point worthy of note that the singing of the *gāthās*, at times, is accompanied by the playing of the lute. We have referred to the practice of singing the *gāthās* at the ritual of *Simantonnayana*. There, the lute-players are asked to sing the *gāthās*. This practice is traceable even in the *Brāhmaṇa-texts*. We have the '*Vīṇāgāthī*', '*Vīṇāgāthinau*' and '*Vīṇāgaṇagaṇinaḥ*' in *Śat. Br.*[27] This shows that both the vocal and instrumental music was used in the rituals. We have already noted that the use of *mantras* was to give firm basis to the ritual. The next stage was that of the use of music, vocal as indicated by the *Sāmans*, and the instrumental as indicated by the lute (or, *vāṇa*, *vāṇīci* etc.). Music, like *mantras*, was the "*rūpa-samṛddha*" part of any ritualistic part of any occasion. In rituals and ceremonies of latter times (and even of our times to-day) we find the use only of instrumental music, the vocal music dwindling into insignificance. However, in some parts of India, vocal music, and also folk-songs, do play an integral part in ceremonies.

Now, the question is—Can we point out some primary *gāthās*? The reply has to be in the affirmative, if we look to the Khila hymns of the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, and there too, the *Kuntāpasūktas*. These hymns are in praise of different objects, including deities and persons ; and, according to their subject matter (which may be termed *pratīka*) they bear different names in the tradition, such as *Kāravyaḥ*, *Pārikṣityaḥ*, *Indragāthāḥ*, *Etaśapralapāḥ* etc. All these are from the *Kuntāpa* hymns. The very name *Indragāthāh* given to one of the sets decides the point, which is that they were all *gāthās* in essence. This gets added support from the tradition, when *Gopatha Br*. (though it may be taken as a late text, in comparison with the other *Br. S*) says in no uncertain terms: "Hence do they, indeed, say that these *Kāravyas* are the *gāthās*, of the king Parīkṣit" (*Uttara*, 6. 12). In fact, these *Kuntāpa* hymns could be renamed as *Pārikṣityaḥ gāthāḥ*, *Janakalpa-gāthāḥ* etc. The *Brāhmaṇa*-texts already indicate a mixture of these folk-songs, (which the *gāthās* are for certain) and some of the original hymns from the *Ṛgveda* in important rituals ; and the composite formation was termed *Śilpa*.[28] There were several other *gāthās* utilized by the priestly class, which shows its ever-readiness to amalgamate folk-traditions to win over new avenues for their influence ; these were turned into the *Yajñagāthās* in certain cases, while others were used to popularize the complex sacrificial ritual over which they kept their monopoly intact. As against the *a-pauruṣeya* Vedic *mantras*, the *gāthās*——including the *Nārāśamsīs*, *Itihāsa* etc.[29] and the whole of the *Kuntāpa* hymns—— represented the *pauruṣeya* floating literature, which came to be incorporated by different families according to their need. This is the reason, probably, why they were termed "Left-outs" (*Khila*).

References

1. *RV* VIII. 32.1; 71.14; 98.9; IX. 99.4; for *gāthā* Ib. I. 167.6; IX. 11.4; *gāthāpati* I. 43.4; *gāthāni* I. 190.1; VIII. 92.2;

ṛjugāthā V. 44.5; *gāthin* I. 7.1. At *RV* X. 85.6 some more meaning is implied by this word. Also see *AV* X. 10.20; XV. 6.4; *Śat. Br.* III. 2.4.16; XI. 5.7.10; XIII. 1.5.6;—4.2.8;—5.4.2; *Taitt. Ār.* 2.10; *Chān. Up.* IV. 17.9 etc.

2. *AV* XV. 6.4; *Taitt-Sam.* VII. 5.11.2; *Ait. Br.* VI. 32; *Kauṣ. Br.* XXX. 5; *Kāṭh. Sam.* V. 5.2; XIV, V; *Taitt. Br.* I. 3. 2.6; *Taitt. Ār.* 11.10.
3. Sāyaṇa on *Śat. Br.* XI. 5.6.8.
4. *SBE*, Vol. 44, p.98 n.5.
5. *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, Pt. I, under *Gāthā*, n. 12.
6. *Pār. Gr.S.* I.7.2. *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* I. 16:16.6 contains one verse only. *Mān. Gṛ,S.* I. 10.5 contains two similar verses to be recited at the *Pāṇigrahaṇa* rite.
7. Devapāla, the commentator of this *Sūtra*, quotes twentyone verses which constitute the *gāthās* to be recited at this occasion; see Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, p. 232.
8. For more information see "Sīmantonnayana".
9. Also *Āp. Gṛ.S.* VI. 14.5-6; *Baudh. Gṛ.S.* I. 10. 1-12, here the *gāthā* agrees with that from the *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* I. 16:16.6; *Kauṣ. Gṛ. S.* I. 14.9; *Āgni. Gṛ.S.* II. 1.2; *Pār. Gṛ.S.* I. 15.7.
10. *Ait. Br.* VIII. 18.
11. Dandekar, R.N. at the *University of Ceylon Review*, 12, p. 65.
12. Winternitz, M., *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, Pt. ii, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 275-276.
13. For example, the *gāthās* in the Ākhyāna of Śunaḥśepa. *Ait. Br.* VII. 18.
14. *Nir.* I. 16, also Dange, S.S. "Gṛhyasūtrātīla gāyana-vādana" (in Marathi), *Annual No. of the Vidarbha Samshodhana Mandala*, Nagpur, 1982, p. 1 ff.
15. Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, p. 13.
16. *Pār. Gṛ.S.* I. 8. 11-13.
17. *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* I. 7.1.
18. Ib. I. 14.8; also *Āp. Gṛ.S.* II. 11.19. Thus, women were the living tradition of customs, recorded or otherwise by the *Śrutis* and the *Smṛtis*.
19. Sāyaṇa on *Ait. Br.* VII. 8.
20. *Ib.*
21. *Ait. Br.* V. 6.
22. Ib. III. 5.
23. *Śat. Br.* XIII. 4.3. 3-15.

24. *Āp. Gṛ.S.* VI. 14. 4-6. The commentary, *Anākula*, points out that the Śālva country was on the bank of the river Yamunā. The country had the Vaiśyas as a majority of population, and Yaugandhari was the king.
25. *Ait. Br.* VIII. 13.
26. Ib. *sakhā ha jāyā kṛpaṇam ha duhitāḷjyotir putraḥ parame vyoman.*
27. Śat. Br. XIII. 4.2.8. Here the word is *vīṇāgāthī* also Ib. 11, 14 for *vīṇāgāthī*; also Ib. XIII. 1.5. 1-6. at XIII. 4.3 1-3 we have *vīṇāgaṇagaṇinaḥ* i.e. 'masters of a group of lute-players'.
28. Dange, Sadashiv A., "The Kuntāpa Hymns". *Amṛtadhārā* (R.N. Dandekar 75th Yr. Fel. Vol.) Delhi, 1984.
29. Winternitz H., *op. cit.*, p. 273 f.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

PROHIBITIVE OR NEGATIVE RULES

In the *Kalpa* tradition and in some of the *Smṛtis*, we come across certain rules of conduct which are prohibitive or negative in nature. It would be interesting to see if they could be included in the widely known anthropo-sociological concept of 'taboo'. This is necessary in view of comparative study of human concepts and social behaviour. Cook, studying social behaviour, points out that the word 'taboo' has a very comprehensive meaning, but, in general, signifies that a (certain) thing is 'forbidden'; and it is applied to all cases where things are not to be touched.[1] 'Taboo' is one of the few words, which the languages of the Pacific islanders have contributed to modern speech,[2] The word is, since, adopted in the English language. It was made familiar by Captain James Cook in the narrative of his third, and last, voyage around the world.[3] Taken in a general and broad sense, the word amounts simply to an imperative, "Thou shall not" in the presence of a danger that is apprehended. As Marett puts it, "Taboo, then, stands for the whole mass of such fear-inspired inhibitions in so far as they proceed directly from the religious emotion, as it regulates the social tradition in the relative abeyance of reasoned directions."[4]

Such a variety of customary abstinences, which, according to Marett, may be called 'negative rites',[5] are also found in the *Gṛhya* as well as *Dharmaśāstra* traditions. Such 'negative' or 'prohibitive' actions, or better injunctions, are known in the *Pūrvamīmāmsā* tradition by the name *Niṣedha*, which is defined as : *puruṣasya nivartakam vākyam niṣedhaḥ*. The word *nivartakam* in this definition implies not only a negation of an act, but has the sense of caution. It is specifically said that such *niṣedha-vākyas* (i.e. statements laying down negation or prohibition) have the purpose of making a person turn away from an action, which is a cause for *anartha* (danger).[6] The famous example, in this context, is "One should not eat *kalañja*" (*na kalañjam bhakṣayet*).[7] The prohibition is connected with the expiation of *Cāndrāyaṇa*, should a person not adhere to it.[8] Thus, the negated or prohibited action, when performed, causes a person contamination of sin, which is sought to be washed away by undergoing an expiation (*prāyaścitta.*)

This concept of *niṣedha* obtains in a clear-cut manner in the crystallized *Mīmāmsā*-discipline, where the *niṣedha* (or, *pratiṣedha*) sees the probability of an act being done by the natural instinct of man—in the terms of traditional expression, when it is *rāgataḥ prāptam*. And, it is negated. This is also clear from the statement : *nāprasaktasya pratiṣedhaḥ*. The word *pra-sakta* does not mean so much as 'enjoined'; it means, 'adhered to'. Hence, many *niṣedhas* do not have an earlier statement of injunctions; we have straight *niṣedhas*. The meaning of the statement, then, would be, "There cannot be any negation, or prohibition, of a matter, which does not imply probability, or adherence." In the words of the *Mīmāmsā-nyāyaprakāśa*, "*prāptisāpekṣyatvāt pratiṣedhasya.*" Thus, even without any injunction, as such, negation implies only *prāpti*; and *prāpti* can be from a *vidhi*-context, or from *rāga*.

In the *Gṛhya* and the *Dharmaśāstra* tradition, in many cases, rules do not appear in a negative form, though their implication is negative, or prohibitive. However, such rules should not be confused with the statements of *paryudāsa*. As is well known, the essence of *paryudāsa* is positive, though in it there is the mention of the negative *na*.[9]

From among the various rules indicative of negation, those which have an idea of sin to be conveyed come under the sphere of 'taboo'. This would show, conversely, that all rules having negation are not 'taboo'. For 'taboo', let us take a few examples :

Rules of continence. Many *Gṛhyasūtras* lay down that, for a period of three nights after the wedding the husband and the wife should abstain from saline or pungent food, and refrain from conjugal union.[10] *Pār.Gṛ.S.* (I. 8.12) prescribes that the period of refrain from conjugal union should be for one whole year, twelve nights, six nights or, at least, three nights. For three nights, or for any definite period, there is no oneness among the *Gṛhyasūtras*; but, all prescribe some sort of continence. Such rules of continence, and restrictions on food, are not peculiar to the *Gṛhya* tradition alone. They obtain elsewhere, and wide areas. The ancient Mexican couples passed four days in prayer and fasting.[11] In certain cases, they were forbidden to eat or drink at a public place, or in public.[12] It is a widely obtained belief that marriage, being the period of transition, necessitates the observance of some special care, involving some rites.[13] The newly married couple being believed to be specially susceptible to evil influences, these restrictions are meant to avert the evil. As such, they have the status of 'taboo'. On the Hindu plane, in some of the *Gṛhyasūtras*, we find the explanation that by observing continence a *ṛṣi* would be born to the couple (*Aśv. Gṛ.S.* I. 8.12; *Baudh. Gṛ.S.* I. 7.1-21 etc.). Here the element of 'taboo' is not to be understood. But, very probably, originally there must have been a 'taboo'. This could be indicated from other texts. Thus, *Baudh. Gṛ.S.* (I. 5.17.10) and *Āp. Gṛ.S.* (III. 8.8-9) say that the couple might sleep on the ground, side by side, but should interpose between them a staff of *udumbara*, anointed with perfumes and wrapped up in a garment, or thread. The staff is, ultimately, set aside. *Āp. Gṛ.S.* (—10) states that in the last part of the fourth night the husband takes up the staff with two *mantras*, washes it and puts it away. *Baudh. Gṛ.S.* (—18-25) says that, after the performance of the sacrifice on the fourth night, the husband takes up the staff with the recitation of a *mantra* and gives it with a certain formula to the wife; she accepts it and returns it; then, it is placed on the supporting pillar of the house, and is thrown in the water the next day. It is said by the commentary *Tātparyadarśana* in the same context, that the staff represents the gandharva Viśvāvasu. This makes it clear that the restriction, or negation, for conjugal union is due to the belief that gandharva Viśvāvasu watches the couple for that period, and that he may harm the couple if the restriction is not carried through. Now, in this light, ihe negative statement shows its nature of a 'taboo'. It goes without saying that a fresh study of the *niṣedhas* would show that quite a few of them had originally the status of the 'taboo'; but this was blurred in due course of time, their place being taken by a promise of a boon that would come true in the future. Thus in *Aśv. Gṛ.S.* and *Baudh. Gṛ.S.* a *ṛṣi* is promised to be born, if the rule is followed. This marks the psychological change in the society, that began to care more for the prospective gain, rather than the prick of sin, or the dart from the evil!

We take another example : The garment of the bride. The *Gṛhyasūtras* mention that the garment of the bride (of the first night) is to be given away (*Aśv. Gṛ.S.* I. 8.13; *Āp. Gṛ.S.* III. 9.11; *Kau.* S. 76.1-4); and the custom could be traced to *RV* (X. 85.28-30) and *AV* (XIV. 1.25-27), where we have reference to the garment being of black and red colour. The garment (*śāmulya*) is to be given away, lest the evil spirit, called *Kṛtyā*, enter the body of the husband, assuming feet. Here we have a clear case for 'taboo'. Now, there is mention of another garment, indicated by the word *vādhūya*. This she wears on the way to her husband's house (i.e. her new house). This is enjoined to be given away to a priest who knows the *Sūrya*-hymn (*sūryāvide*), which is *RV* X. 85, referred to above.[14] In both these cases, there is no clear negation, say in such words as "She should not wear the *śāmulya*", or "She should not wear the *vādhūya* afterwards." But, as there is a clear reference to danger in the first case, it has to be taken as that of 'taboo' while such is not the case regarding the other. But, there is room for suspicion if there was no 'taboo' about the case, and it is since lost. The case deserves consideration more so; because, the (second) garment was worn throughout the journey, infested by many evil spirits—on the trees, at the river-crossing etc.

Likewise, there are a number of rules for a pregnant woman,[15] and for a woman in her period.[16] Most of these have to be taken as 'taboos', though there is no specific mention of a sin or danger. All over the world, the ancients believed that women in these periods are susceptible to danger; hence, they should themselves be kept away. Here comes the element of the 'taboo'.

There are various prohibitive rules for a *snātaka*. After the completion of his studies the *brahmacārī*, with the permission of his preceptor, used to take the final *snāna* (bath), which marked the end of that stage of his life. Such a *brahmacārī* was recognized as *snātaka* till he entered the stage of a householder. There are several rules of the nature of prohibitive negations laid down for a *snātaka*. Some of them are as follows:— He should not run while it is raining; he should not climb a tree; he should not jump into a well nor should he swim in a river. He should not stake his life in any way. *Aśv. Gṛ.S.* says that the life of a *snātaka* is very valuable because he has taken hardships to complete the course of his studies.[17] Other texts also give such rules.[18] To turn to the rules given by the *Pār. Gṛ. S.*, the *snātaka* should use the word *vijanyā* and not *garbhiṇī* in the case of a pregnant woman (II. 7.10). He should say *sakula* instead of *nakula* for an ichneumon (*Ib*.. 11); he should say *bhagāla* instead of *kapāla* for a pot-sherd (*Ib*. 12); and he should say *maṇīdhanus* instead *indradhanus* for the rain-bow (*Ib*. 13). It seems, there is an idea of danger attached to the words *garbhiṇī* etc., noted above. A little thought would indicate what we say. The first three words signify something which is incomplete. Thus, in the case of the *garbhiṇī* the child is yet to be born; *nakula* indicates the absence of *kula* (noble birth); *kapāla* is actually a broken part. The *snātaka* himself being in a delicate position, as will be discussed further, the use of these words is inauspicious; and they are forbidden for him. Instead of these, he should use words that indicate fullness, and prosperity.[19] About the word *indradhanus*, it is said by *Ap. Dh.S.* (I. 3.11.27) and *Gaut. Dh.S.* (XVI. 9-10) that the study of the Vedas is to be suspended whenever a rainbow is visible in the sky. *Par. Gṛ.S.* (VIII. 23.9) lays down the muttering of *mantras* with the offerings into the fire. These rules have lost their status of 'taboo' and have remained only as prohibitive negations in tradition.

The famous prohibitive rule, "He should not see the sun rising and setting" (*nekṣed ud yantam ādityam, na astam yantam*), as it occurs in the texts, does not seem to have any idea of sin attached to it, or of any danger to the *snātaka*. Further, it has been taken as a case of *paryudāsa*, as noted above, stating that the idea is not of prohibition, but of some definite resolve (*saṅkalpa*), which is positive. This means, clearly, that the original sense of the negation has been glossed over. But, if we compare a similar instruction for the *dīkṣita* at the Vedic sacrifice, the rules being parallel in most cases as initiation is also said to be *dīkṣā*, the element of negation gets prominence; and, with it, the point of 'taboo' comes to the fore. The sacrificer (*dīkṣita*) is forbidden to be out of the sacrificial chamber at, and after, the sun-rise or sun-set, lest he be out of the womb.[20] It is believed that he is the *garbha*;[21] and to be out of the chamber is out of the womb; if he goes out, he would be overpowered by evil forces; the sacrifice will be lost. Hence, all the rites of *agnyādhāna* etc., even the *dīkṣā* has to be done afresh ; or, a *prāyaścitta* has to be gone through. The sacrificial chamber is called *vimita*, which is also the womb. The case of the *snātaka*, before his final bath, is similar. He is in the *dīkṣā* period, till he finishes the studies and takes the final bath before going home. Though he has to go out, unlike the sacrificer, to perform the duties enjoined by the preceptor, the solar motif from the sacrificial context has lingered. Hence, though there is no mention of danger, being unmindful of the rise and the setting of the sun is felt to be harmful for him.

Thus, it will be seen, the extant nature of many a rule of prohibition could be profitably examined.

References

1. *Ency. of Rel. and Ethics*, Vol. XII, p. 181.
2. *Tabu*, a Tongan word; *tapu*, found in Samoa, the Marqueas islands, the Society islands and New Zealand; *kapu*, a Hawaiian word. The word *tapu* is derived etymologically in two ways by

Edward Shortland, *Traditions and Superstitions of New Zealanders*, 2nd ed., London, 1856, p. 10.

3. James Cook and James King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, London, 1784, Vols. I and II by Cook, and Vol. III by King. The more about *tabu* is known from William Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 1829.
4. *Ency. of Rel. and Ethics.*, Vol. XII, p. 183a, article on *Tabu* by Marett, R.R.
5. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.
6. *Arthasaṅgraha*, ed. by Paranjape, S.M., Bombay, 1927, 109.
7. *Kalañja* is said to be flesh of a beast or a bird, killed with an arrow smeared with poison; according to some, it is fermented food.
8. *Arthasaṅgraha*, ed. by Paranjape, p. 305.
9. The following verse points out the difference between *paryudāsa* and *niṣedha*: *paryudāsaḥ sa vijñeyo yatra pūrvapadena nañ prātiṣedhaḥ sa vijñeyo yatrottarapadena nañ*. The famous example is *nekṣed ud yantam ādityam*, which is taken as hinting at *anīkṣaṇasaṅkalpa* on the part of the *snātaka*, and falls under *tasya vratam*, which is to be undertaken positively; we shall come to this point.
10. *Gobh. Gṛ.S.* II. 3.15; *Khā. Gṛ.S.* I.4.9; *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* I.8.10; *Hir. Gṛ. S.* I. 23.10; *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* I. 19: 20.2; *Vaikh. Gṛ.S.* III. 8:41.17; *Kauṣ. Gṛ.S.* I. 10.15. It is interesting to note in this connection, that *haviṣyānnam*, cooked material to be offered into the sacrificial fire is without salt.
11. Clavigero, F.S., *The History of Mexico*, 2nd ed., London, 1807, p. 320f.
12. Webster. H., *Taboo—A Sociological Study*, California, 1942, p. 156.
13. *Ency. of Rel. aud Ethics*. Vol. VIII, p. 431a.
14. For more details, see "The Garment of the Bride".
15. For rules prescribed for the pregnant woman—Bhāg. P. VI. 18. 47-54—Pumsavana (vow); VIII. 16.24ff.—Payovrata (vow).
16. Rules prescribed for a woman in menstruation *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* I. 20: 21-2 cf. *Taitt. Sam.* II. 5.1. 5-6, *Āp. Gṛ.S.* III. 8.12; *Hir. Gṛ.S.* I. 24.7; *Baudh.Gṛ.S.* I, 7.22-36; *Vaikh. Gṛ.S.* III. 9.
17. *Āśv. Gṛ.S.* III. 9.6-8.
18. *Vas. Dh.S.* XII. 25.26.45; *Gaut. Dh.S.* IX. 35; *Pār. Gṛ.S.* II. 7.6,

17, 18; *Śat. Br.* XI. 3.3.7; *Gobh. Gṛ.S.* III. 5.2-20; Ib. 21-38; *Mān Gṛ.S.* I. 2.19.

19. Thus the word *vijanyā* signifies the birth of a child (from vi+ $\sqrt{}$jan); *sakula* denotes the meaning *sa+kula* i.e. with *kula* (family); *bhagāla* denotes *bhaga* i.e. prosperity.
20. *Ait. Br.* I. 3.
21. *Śat. Br.* III. 1.3.28.

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65	21	Kubha	Kubhā
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	1 from bottom	Ib *cindra*	Ib^{c} indra